

CANNES and the HILLS

RÉNÉ JUTA



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VINTAGE.

CANNES AND THE HILLS

BY RÉNÉ JUTA

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WITH EIGHT PICTURES
IN COLOUR BY JAN JUTA



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DEDICATION
TO
RUDYARD KIPLING

Lou Miracé.

Mougins A.M.

My Dear Mr. Kipling,

When I asked you to come up to our hills you were not able to, so now, may I send the hills to you, for you are greater than Mahomet. You have taught me to see on mound and in vale the history left by dead men, and to kindle a soul under the ribs of metropolitan death.

In gratitude and in remembrance please accept this book.

Yours,

RÉNÉ JUTA.

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ARRIVALS IN CANNES

I

ARRIVALS IN CANNES

THERE exist details and traditional accuracies and inaccuracies of various entries into Cannes. Classic entries, haphazard entries, determined, ruthless entries ; for though the archives of the countryside are embodied mainly in the silent knowledge of the olive trees, there are a few signs and wonders in prehistoric stone camps and coffins, earthen pots, old monnaies, and some rare old papers—"vieux papiers." And then there is the saga of the people, the barometrical, atavistic people of the seaside and the countryside, with their immutable lives, their immutable customs and fancies. True, the old costumes of the country, even those of traditional Grasse, have disappeared, the prevailing black being the last vestige of tradition ; but the people—oh ! the people are there, leavened, as they have always been, by the latest invader. The latest invader is the Italian from the North—from the mountains : and the last entry, classic or otherwise, is mine : Marina enters—and stays.

And I have entered many times and in many ways : from the North, in an ambulance in wartime, through

high mountain passes where the little mosses had lately been covered with snow; when the sun and the oranges of Cannes assumed proportion that excluded a further need of heaven. Another time on foot over the Estérel, in the moonlight; through Mandelieu; above the ruins of Arluc, the cypress trees on the hill of St. Cassien, silhouettes of pagan days. And centuries before, from the opposite direction the Huns entered, under their chief Alboin, fresh from their appalling destruction of the beautiful Roman town of Cemenalum, the present Cimiez. They utterly destroyed the Roman town of Arluc in the plains below St. Cassien, and the Roman Station of Thermes, where were the hot springs and baths.

This awful Lombard destruction had been predicted by a pious old anchorite, St. Hospice, some years before: "The Lombards shall come into Gaul and shall utterly destroy several cities for the punishment of the Gauls who have committed great sins, especially in Provence."

But to return to my own milder entries. This time in a crowded train, overheated, overcrowded. The joy of running into the warm hours round Avignon, then later, with the agonies of a sleepless night still upon me, the relief of Marseilles in the sun, the gradual opening of carriage windows, the scent of sea, and red-stemmed pines, the fleeting vision of red rock and green blue sea, the background glory of the snow-capped Italian Alps; and so—past gay villa gardens and palm trees into the gare de Cannes.

There have been bleak grey days of arrival when the train has been followed, along the Boulevard du Midi



CANNES HARBOUR AND THE SUQUET.

with its perpetually washed-away esplanade, by a howling, shrieking mob of sea-gulls ; when the limited fury of the Mediterranean waves has dashed even as far as the railway lines. There have been days of cold winds, winter "mistrals" blowing off the snow line, which almost encircles Cannes and its country. There have been days of hot African sirocco, which blowing once for seventy-two hours over the island of Sicily kept me hidden deep in the dark cool shades of the Syracusan Latomea until its fury was spent. I had first met the sirocco blowing up hot and parched from the desert, over the cool Papyrus groves round the fountain of Cyrene. It followed us along the green Anapos river, withering the yellow iris and terrifying the nightingales and king-fishers. It caught us with a fury on the marshy grounds where the river joins the sea, and swept with us in blasting hotness across the Bay of Syracuse. What a wind ! Parching ! Best on days like this to be a Christian, lurking along subterranean passages to cool, hidden meeting places.

Here, round Cannes, the sirocco comes on one with a suddenness, and the world is a vast melting pot and the grasses wither. And so on, for three days. It seems that all winds in this world last for three days. The sirocco fortunately is an occasional summer wind, and well to be within four thick stone walls while it blows. It heralds the moment of forest fires, when acres of pine woods blaze to heaven, and the wind sweeps along the flames certain of an easy passage. But of these anon.

Entries are my theme ; classic, culminating perhaps in the solemn Roman entry. For years before, the

Phoenicians had stolen in quietly with a gentle lap of a sail; and later the Greeks stepped off their hated galleys and made their winter camping grounds. They used Théoule as a custom house, and Napoule as a trading station. Their chief port and town was further round the coast at Agay. There, on a high peak of the Estérel, just above the bay, they built their Temple to Pallas Athene. No self-respecting Greek merchant was going to remain one second on sea if there was a propitious land at hand. Better to pull ship over land, yea, even over the Estérel to the nearest river, than face the uncertain sea they dreaded. Hence their entries were instructive and protective, devoid of unnecessary pomp or pageant.

Sit under the shade of the curious zebra-like trees in the Allées, the shady avenues edging the harbour of Cannes, drink with us a quiet "apéritif" in the sacred circle of the Café des Allées, towards the end of the season. Slow-moving, white-robed, fezged figures slink between shadow and sun, bearing carpets from Tunis, Angora sheep skins, silk shawls, worked curtains from across the sea; they bargain for ever, bargain in their slow even voices, their lying gentle voices, soothing though inspiring no confidence, their calculating defensive eyes taking little account of the unlikely buyer; their slim, Eastern figures for ever pushing their wares before your eyes. So the Phoenicians and the Levant people did before them. Bargaining and plunder, bartering, need, and trade, and commerce from Marseilles to Nicea. The original people watched the invader, then fraternized. The Oxybians from their town

Egitna—Ekitna—Kana—Cannes—that's how it runs through the slovenly medium of many ages.

Egitna, a sharp, rocky, low-walled town camp, full of dark smallish people who buried their dead crouching in shallow tombs, and fraternized with the Greeks who taught them the culture of the olive and the vine. They believed in gratitude and neighbourly bonds, and in the immortality of the soul. But cute people, "slim," or described best by the French word "interessé"—out for themselves—an eye to the main chance. Their name had two alternative derivations—through the Greek "Eli" "men of the mountains," or through the Celtic "men of the sea." Both would describe them. Economical, nervous, serious and war-like people, but better still at fishing and piracy, plundering merchant ships, midnight raidings on neighbouring shores and a rapid sail towards the friendly islands not far distant, called after a great chief, Léro. These islands were littered with good caves in which to bury the plunder.

Oh, these Islands, full of ghosts of pirates and robbers, marauders, saints and bishops, Romans, Spaniards, mysterious prisoners, and even the ghost of a French actress who lived and died on the island of St. Honorat, sandwiched in between monastic days and lapses. Did all these ghosts eat "Bouillabaisse" I wonder?—"Bouillabaisse," food fit for Southern gods who loved good oil and strong garlic, as made by the seamen of the South? In Bouillabaisse you may find the apotheosis of all the tastes and strong flavours of all the invaders of these Mediterranean shores.

Behold Marina on a fair day in May (when all the hivernants have returned to the spring snows of the North), on the Lérins islands, the sun rays stronger than any better day in an English midsummer; Marina, encamped from the comfortable joys of a motor launch and a passage of fifteen minutes from the Cannes harbour. Here on the grey rocks of Ste. Marguerite, near the ruins of an old tower, under the low sweeping shade of the pines, a fire, a large pot and two stalwart fishermen, preparing with cunning and solemn rite of bay leaf, oil, tomato, garlic, lobster, fish, potato and saffron, the magic glorious dish of the people of the South, "La Bouillabaisse." Certain, that the ghosts of the Lérins islands hovered around that savoury, most exquisite smell. Certain, the Ligurian chief, Léro himself, hopped around the magic circle, his red-sailed craft furled and tethered in some deep creek. Certain, that a fat Abbot, drawn from devotion and diplomacy in his monastery on St. Honorat, paddled quickly as dignity allowed from the low lying opposite shore across the narrow passage. And a stately, swinging young Roman named Julius Catulinus, scenting the aroma, tramped across the thyme and camomile herbs of the island from the Roman school for boatmen lying on the land side. Certain, there were Spanish Grandees, the Genoese admiral Andrea Doria, from his wraith fleet manoeuvring around Antibes and Golfe Jouan, and a certain Napoleon Buonaparte on his way through from Elba out towards Italy in the sea mists.

A goodly company Marina entertains. A picnic for the Shades. And later, when the saffron soup with its

rounds of bread had been eaten and the Shades beheld the lobster ready, a tall, strong dark woman with sparkling eyes, dressed in black, with a small-crowned, wide-brimmed, black hat perched on her dark hair, and a silver dish in her hand, smilingly stepped into the circle and helped herself to the Bouillabaisse, and carried it away through the wood. The "woman of Mougins," she who was servant to the prisoner in the iron mask ; he, lying in the great prison on the cliffs beyond the woods.

Now this is surely the real way to enter Cannes—through the joys of the stomach ! And so you will grow to know immediately the people of Cannes, who are now great ghosts and were great eaters too. The new invader is a poor dog, a meagre eater, he eats *pâte* and tomato and has no part in this company. Presently we shall meet more Shades, but they will be passed along the great Aurelian Road on their way to and from the Forum Julii, which is now Fréjus, beyond the Estérel.

The arrival of the Romans was not peaceable like that of the Greeks. The Oxybians recognized conquerors and they fought and were beaten : leaving their city to the new arrivals they obeyed the Roman decree : that the inhabitants of a conquered city should be banished for seven years twelve leagues away from their citadel. And Mongins or Mougins or Mons-Egitnoe became of importance. Here at least, were it a question of unconquered pride, the ancient inhabitants dominated Cannes or Egitna and saw eye to eye

with the opposite Roman camp of *Castrum Sertori*, later called *Castellaras*. The Greeks had gone, bequeathing to the land and to the people a certain philosophy, deeply rooted in all modern Provencals, a kindly tolerance and a mysticism far deeper than any form of faith. Possibly, it was the combination of these three moral inheritances that gave to Christianity so spontaneous and easy a reception in the South. There was a credence and a sympathy which poured balm and mystic glory over each new hermit who sought a safe cave in the *Estérel* mountains. This is the inheritance of the Greeks of *Marseilles-Marsallia*, not, as some chroniclers would have it, that the only souvenir left by the Greeks in Provence was the language and the money. The Greeks' allies, the Romans, came twice, to help quell the constant warrings of the Litoral people, grown suddenly antagonistic: once, the Roman envoys come for counsel, were fallen upon while debarking in Cannes harbour and had hastily to retreat; they came again with an army under *Quintus Opimus* and fought and never conquered completely these *Ligurians*: indeed, after eighty years warring and sparring, they failed to obtain a breadth of twelve *Stradea* for the purpose of making a public road. But with their great wisdom and their flair for the perfecting of a conquered colony, they ruled so gently and cautiously, that, though they changed the name of *Egitna* into *Castrum Marseilianum*, the town remained to all intents, for many years a Greek trading village—a "counter," as it was called. This until some fifty years B.C., when *Julius Caesar* after the fall of *Marseilles* annexed all

the Greek Colonies along the Litoral: even then, with the colonizing genius of the Romans, the Greek Governor was left in his position of importance at *Castrum Romanum* (Cannes).

The Greek geographer, Strabo, contemporary of the Emperor Augustus, the Elder Pliny, and Tacitus, leaves us records and curiously intriguing details of the life and doings of the Litoral: but vague enough at times to leave scope for conjecture, even if one rules out entirely that psychic knowledge which yet remains on the twin antennæ of our consciousness—science and magic. Let us call this sense the consciousness of atmosphere; archives in ether: irrefutable, the day that the sixth sense is established and used for our needs.

The trace of Roman domination we meet in ancient vineyards among old tombs, in the dilapidated Arena at Fréjus, their great Forum Julii (built by Augustus in honour of his dishonourable daughter Julia), in half-ruined aqueducts and wayside memorial tablets, old altars, and old names.

For the next arrivals and those who pressed on their heels left hardly one stone upon the other. That there was any further life, spirit or history after the ultimate defeat of the Saracens at Fraxinet by William of Provence is a perpetual memorial to the strong roots and the placid acceptance of this people, who survive the endless invasions. The hosts of Barbarians from the North poured down, with fire and famine in their train; the Litoral had hardly recovered, when the greatest people then in the world, the Saracens, swept

over Southern Europe. The half-hazy fairy tale told to English children of the Crusades, here in the South, assumes the importance it deserves. One now knows why all the men in Europe left their women and children and an aged priest or two in their Towers of the keep, to do quaint needle work and polish extra swords and write painstakingly old missals, and almost to die of starvation. One knows why Kings who shipped to Acre were made Saints, and why the narrow pilgrim road winding down from Avignon to Grasse was protected at every vantage point by the watch towers and the small chapels-of-ease of the Knight Templars. The tale of the Saracens in Europe has to be read in Provence to be finally understood.

There is only one oasis in this desert of pillage and fire, the story of the Saracen Princess who loved the noble Guy de Bourguignon, and that tale will be told (Marina tells it to a child named Gillian) in another chapter.

And anyway, these ghastly invasions are hardly part of the chapter which professes to deal in classic entries and arrivals, nor part of that in which we meet shades along the great Aurelian way to Italy.

But we must count the arrival and the continued stay of the Austrians in 1746 ; of their General, Maximilian Ulysses Brown : the epitaph of their unfortunate sojourn has drifted into the language, for when it is a question of bearing something with patience and resignation, the people say—"it will go one day, even the Germans went." The next classical arrival which so fascinates that a whole chapter must be devoted to it, is the arrival

and stay, mostly in bivouac, of the Emperor Napoleon Buonaparte. Cannes has witnessed undisturbed such arrivals and departures as those of Augustus, the Buonaparte King Murat, fleeing from Naples; the flight of the Duchess of Guise to Florence; and a later arrival that comes under the heading "haphazard" is the arrival in the early nineteenth century of Lord Brougham. This Englishman is the first of that long, continuous procession of Anglo-Saxons who have streamed down into Cannes ever since the noise of its beauty went forth.

He was for Italy: all good aristocrats went to Italy in those days. Shelley had died there, Byron had loved there, the Ambassador in Rome ranked next almost to the Pope; the Sermonetas, the Sforza Caesarini, the Colonnas, the Borghesi, had all married into important English families; the Rome season was part of the London season—en avance; the Italian Riviera was *the* Riviera—until Lord Brougham discovered Cannes!

Because of cholera in France, the frontier of Piedmont, namely the Var river between Cannes and Nice, was closed to travellers. So, hearing the distressing news soon after leaving Aix, the big coach of the Broughams rattling down the narrow streets of old Cannes, stopped at the famous Hotel Princhinat, later the Hotel de la Poste, situated at the foot of Suquet on the old Port. There was no foreshore then, no mole. Beyond the inn on a rocky edge, a small fisher chapel, now destroyed for harbour purposes. To the right of the inn, what is now the long wide sweep of the Boulevard du Midi and the Brougham Gardens, was marshy ground,

canes and reeds and the wild iris where the rocks ended.

And from this date Cannes ceased to be of historical interest. It began its career of white villas, railways, shops, croisettes, casinos and people everyone knows.

A LEGEND OF MARSEILLES

II

A LEGEND OF MARSEILLES

THIS is a legend of Marseilles, that “town of the Ligurians in the country of the Celts.” It would have but small excuse in appearing in this book of Cannes, were it not for an old inscription in Marseilles, which runs—“Ville des Phocéens ! soeur de Rome ! rivale de Carthage !”

There’s a banner to fly ! They were not modest these Greeks of Massilia ! But, it being a legend of the surrender of a people through love, and the people being Ligurians, the neighbours of the Ligurian Oxybians and the other people being the first Greeks of Marseilles, I feel this beautiful story of Gyptis may be borrowed for Cannes, as one may borrow of a friend or a relative.

It happened in the sixth century B.C., in 589, in the first year of the forty-fifth Olympiade, that Salyes Mannus, king of the Segobrians, gave a great feast in honour of his beautiful daughter Gyptis. To the feast were bidden the chiefs of the neighbouring towns : among them was the Oxybian chief, great sailor and warrior, Léro. The Salyes chieftains and the chieftains of the neighbouring tribes brought to Gyptis all the best gifts they had to offer. One laid at her slim brown

feet reed crates, filled with oranges and sweet grapes from Iberia ; for they were adventurous mariners and vied with all the Mediterranean peoples in adventure and commerce. Another chief presented some yards of lovely dyed wool from Tyre, from where his ship had lately returned ; while another, a young man, who, from much travelling across the waters had seen beautiful works of Greek art, had copied a statue of a slim-bodied young man, on his knees, with uplifted outstretched arms. This figure pleased Gyptis very much and she smiled favourably upon the young chief who offered her this gift, which she refused to be parted from, carrying it to the "concours" of games of distant lands preceding the feast which Mannus, who tenderly loved his daughter, had decided must terminate in Gyptis choosing a husband from among the assembled chiefs. But towards the middle of the day, before the jousts of strength and prowess were to take place, a ship was sighted making for the port of the Salyes. The vessel sheltered in a little cove, and, presently arrived a message to the chieftain.

Mannus and his people knew the Mariners of the ship. They were Phoceans from one of the richest and most prosperous towns on the Ionian coast, but a town now too thickly populated and almost unable to support its increasing inhabitants. The Phoceans were a kindly people, and in their ports the Salyes sailors had often found shelter from pirates and tempest, and had no doubt boasted of their lovely country in Gallia. The Phoceans brought with them presents : presents of chiselled golden objects, arms worked to exquisite per-

fection with all the cunning and taste of Greek art. These they begged the Salyes to accept. In return, the Phoceans besought a piece of land where they might colonize under the protection and friendship of Mannus and thus give greater scope for their numerous peoples in their overcrowded country. Mannus, full of happiness and the spirit of festival, would grant all, and invited the band to assist at the fête. And Protis, the leader, walked ahead. And here the eyes of Gyptis lit upon a hero, more beautiful than the legendary Heracles, she had heard of from friends in the North, more graceful than the slim Greek statue that the aspiring suitor had so earnestly copied for her gift. And when he spoke, Gyptis dared no longer lift her eyes. She trembled and was afraid, for no sooner had she seen Protis than she had loved him. The fête was continued, and instead of the usual Salian dances the Greeks danced—in slow rhymic measure—the dance of the young men before the maidens. And as Protis danced, his eyes rested upon Gyptis.

When night fell they feasted in a deep wood where great torches of pine lighted the banquet. Gyptis parted the garlands of flowers so that she might better see Protis, and Protis, though he spoke to the chieftains, spoke really to the heart of Gyptis—and to her alone—of his land and culture, of feasts and feats, of the glory of the temples; and he spoke in the poetry of his people of the ways of their gods; of war, and of love.

The chieftains dared not interrupt, though now all saw the great thing that was as a miracle before them;

some were mad with jealousy, but all held their peace.

So it happened that when the feast was over, Mannus with trembling hand filled the cup with the water of the sacred fountain, and Gyptis took the cup in her two slim brown hands and lifted it to her lips—but her eyes sought Protis always. She drank three drops, then advancing as in a dream, slowly, towards Protis, she handed him the marriage cup.

And it was thus that the Phoceans settled on the ground given as a marriage gift, and they made their port, and built their acropolis on the heights of the Carmes with much ceremony and many sacred cakes called "Massa," offered to the goddess of their choice. And the peoples crying "Massa, Massa," saw the Temple built, and later, the town, gathering and growing below. Some say the name Massilia came because of the sacred cakes offered to the Goddess on the great day of the anniversary, when the spontaneous free action of Gyptis welded the Ligurian, Latin temperament to the suave dignified elegance of mind and body of the Greek.

This is the legend of two great lovers who are long dead.

**SOME SAINTS OF THE
RIVIERA: AND CARNIVAL**

III

SOME SAINTS OF THE RIVIERA : AND CARNIVAL

THE bells, the cracked, beloved mad old bells of the Suquet church used to peal with especial zest on the day of St. Jinn Jinn. Now their cracked inefficient perfection has been gorgeously replaced. New beautiful sedate bells grace the belfry whose stones kept Saracens in their proper place, and later with southern adaptiveness admitted the conquerors as master. The south submits to the inevitable, always. But the new bells are too superior for St. Jinn Jinn ; tom-toms would be more in the spirit of this saint, whose name savours of the East—Djin Djin, the Djinn of Djinns, the greatest of all geni : who knows ? He is now the patron saint of the Croisette, the place of parade, an atavistic saint, more intensely Cannois than all the Virgins of the Voyage (did not the Virgin land somewhere along this southern coast ?), far more belonging to this curious heterogenous people than all other saints in the calendar.

I fancy Jinn Jinn was the totem of dead Cannes. I suspect his definite name came upon him and remained after the arrival of the Saracens : but no doubt he existed before their turbulent misrule : no doubt the

people of Egitna worshipped gods of sorts : they believed in the immortality of the soul : someone had made an altar to Isis on the seashore. Jinn Jinn was a god perhaps, their definite sympathetic god, in the misty indefinite days of their city of Egitna. He was not a great warrior : he was a kindly juju, with a winking kindly eye for his pirate followers. He made faces at the Phoenicians and their galleys ; he laughed at the Greeks, doing excursions from their winter trading stations at Agay and Trayas ; perhaps, he was a little overcome by the Roman pomp of Roman governors, for they turned him into a Saint ! That gave him a new lease of life. St. Jinn Jinn, he of the Croisette, and sun, and fêtes, and confetti thrown to keep away the evil ones : Harlequin, in his black masque, the devil to be made friends with—for the people of the south are too wise to fight the devil and all evil ones ; they give him gifts, they call them by good names, lest they should be greater devils and work much ill. Carnival is his great moment, for it is the festival of the rebirth of the world, the breaking of the Eliptical Egg : the cracking of the shell of the earth, and the rebirth ; the Renaissance ; the Sepulchre giving the body back to life with renewed beauty—beauty unrecognisable ; Persephone returning arms the darkness of the underworld, leaping into the from of Ceres ; the waters giving up their dead ; Jonah reborn from the belly of death ;—these are the cars of this Carnival, great and small, gilded, rusty cars, fairy tales, nursery rhymes, myths, truths. A long procession to wind and meander through the narrow streets of Cannes.

And behold! the Clown, the Clown omnipotent, seated as Jove, tremendous in size, to show his importance. Look! our Saint is become King Carnival; our Djinn assumes kindlier guise. His stomach is well-filled—too well-filled in proportion to the gifts of the faithful. No aesthete, this saint Carnival. His huge face is a grin as he grinned in his juju days at the early invaders, so he grins at you—you foreigners—"Estrangers"—you poires, pears to be sucked; sucked very dry, and then crystalized; so that you will gamble with your last penny and drop dead at the eighteenth hole of the Mandelieu golf-links—of course he grins. He knows, this Saint Jinn Jinn. He is the piper, and is in league with the sun and the sea and the roses. You have brought bad servants with you—they look after your luggage but they give you away, you Estrangers; and old Jinn Jinn is in league with them. He knows your servants, who should be your slaves, and are your masters. He knows: the sun and the sea and the moon, and the roses, and the scent of the orange blossom at night, the silhouette of a cypress and the song of the nightingales, the lure of the tables, the sound of the jazz, they know what your senses are, your servant senses: how they will give you away! So the Saint Carnival smiles and grins over a cloud of paper confetti that were once good little cakes of meal or rye, flung to appease his godship—now, synthetic bribery, multi-coloured, falling amid the trampled flowers of Flora.

We must not forget, should we be too inclined to linger over the possibilities of this carnivalesque Saint, that in one day, the Saracens on St. Honorat sent five hundred

saints to heaven, which anyhow gives nearly an average of two saints a day during the year. But prepare for a further surprise. The human nature of this people of the South is loving and giving and all embracing. There is St. Fénian—a Saint, indeed, of the Slackers, the ne'er-do-much, a pleasure-loving idle person, drunk and disorderly, probably: but how comforting a religion this, where Fénians have their special Saint. Also, there is St. Estropié—the Saint of the duds, the hopeless! We smile and are appeased. I fancy there are saints for every day in the Midi. year, and for you and me.

During the summer months, after the récolte of the orange flower, there is a saintly occasion for a fête day nearly every day in every small village on the Litoral. Certainly, the fêtes are degenerating into jazz and a travelling show, but, on the feast day of St. Jean, they still light the street fires, the sacred fires of Baal or Moloch to be “passed through”; they still play “boules” in the main street, as the “games” were played by the Greeks, oblivious of motor char-a-bancs, or the squeaking rattling tram; and beyond Fréjus they still slay the white bull, and the young men who are virgins eat of the entrails, and the young man who is youngest and most beautiful partakes of the rôle of priest and god; he stands in the church near the high altar and exhorts his brethren. This is a festival of the men, and of the Romans who worshipped Mithras and is among the Greek mysteries; to say nothing of Christian ones. The fires of the worshippers of Baal are lit in the streets and on all farms on the eve of St.

Jean : and the games of the Greeks, on their days of festival—you may see them being played any fête day through the long hot summer months, when the dilapidated, roadway altars are decorated with the flowers of the people who pass by, and the auréole of the Blessed Virgin is lost among the pink hedge-roses and the blue borragé which compose Demeter's Crown.

Among the legends of Provence is one, The Cars of Osiers, which has a part in any chapter on Carnival. I read it some years ago in Arles, as written by Monsieur Charles Roux. I will relate it as far as I remember.

You may know the Riviera flower baskets made of split rushes, baskets made for the export of flowers and fruit : composed of those curious canes that grow in any swampy ground along the Riviera coast. Think, when you pack your carnations or tangerines in these neat little baskets, upon their far distant origin. For these, a hundred times magnified, placed upon wheels, and drawn by good Gaulois oxen, decorated and filled with flowers and foliage, once took part in the great fête of the Floralties, a fête of Flora which coincided with our Carnival.

Now after the death of Mannus, the Salyes chieftain, Comanus the brother of Gyptis reigned in his father's stead. And there grew an ever-increasing jealousy on the part of the Salyes, against the flourishing town of the Phocæan colonists. But their jealousy and ire were not a match for the strength and pleasantness of the Greeks. Also, they feared the Greeks, these half-civilized Gauls.

Arrived the moment of the Carnival, the Floralties,

when the women decked themselves in new colours, when dry grain was thrown in the streets and all was laughter and dancing. According to their custom, the neighbouring peoples were invited to assist at the festivities. And Comanus, the new king, and his jealous frightened chiefs, resolved to profit by this splendid occasion. They had heard from Greek lips the legend of Troy, and they would profit by Greek experience.

The decorated waggons and cars of the Ligurians who were to assist in the carnival were drawn up in readiness to enter the town of Massilia. That night, the young Gallic warriors, armed and brave, hid themselves amid the flowers and greens of the carnival cars, to be gently drawn into the unsuspecting city ; and in the dawn to open the gates to their invading, avenging army.

But there went with the rush baskets not only warriors, but a lovely lady, a relative of the king, and she loved a Greek in Massilia. And during the long night hours, in his rooms on the seashore, under the spell of that amoral Southern moon, she told him, amid many vows of secrecy, the way of her coming to him, and of the armed young men who lay that night among the flowers in the carnival cars.

The young gallant leapt from the arms of his lady and warned the magistrates and great men of Massilia. The flower-hidden warriors were killed where they lay, and next day a trap was laid for the king and his chieftains. Comanus was killed with seven thousand Salyes at the gate of the city. Athene verily looked

after her own people, for once more, the love of a Gaulois woman for a Greek went to the making of this Phocæan colony and to its magnitude and glory. But from that day the great gates of Marseilles were closed to any armed stranger, in peace time or in war.

THE HERMITAGE OF ST.
CASSIEN

IV

THE HERMITAGE OF ST. CASSIEN

ST. CASSIEN or Arluc lies half-way between Cannes and La Napoule on the Route Nationale. The Mound of St. Cassien was not the labour of man's hand. This I have from the early report of a scientist who wrote on the mineralogy and the geography of the Var. He calls it "an antedeluvian pudding," formed by calcair and "turf" deposited by the waters of the Siagne.

The Romans certainly may have adapted this "poudingue" to suit their occasion which was to protect the Aurelian way, running below the mount, and our way also if we have come from or to Cannes. There is the old story that they raised this fortified post in one night. But long before the Romans came the people of the country, the Oxybians, placed their altar there—perhaps in honour of the sun god or their goddess who may possibly have had a name so resembling "Tuan" or Venus, as to give permission to say it was a temple to an Oxybian Venus. There are even some old legends which place the site of the original Egytna between the mount and the sea, and this would account for the importance of Arluc.

Anyhow, the Romans found a good altar ready for them, and the Oxybians turned out of their city at Cannes, went to their exile on the Hill of Mougins, the necessary twelve leagues of exile imposed by the conquering Romans; from here they might see the sun rise in Italy and set in France, "then descending immortal, immortal to rise again."

The Roman conquerors immediately gave a name to the mount, calling it Ara Lucis—autel du Bois Sacré—Altar of the sacred wood. From this may have come Arluc the name given to the entirely disappeared village at the mouth of the Siagne. The Romans required water conveniently near for their Ara-Luci garrison, and turned the course of the river that it flowed well round the west cliff of their mount, forming almost an island. And the Roman Temple to Venus flourished and remained in the hearts of the people long after the Romans left, to the disturbance of the Christian Abbot of the Lérins. He found that the virgins and priestesses of Venus were a sore blot upon land so lately christianized and so near to the very fount of the new religion; stories of import were brought to the abbey on the old island of Plantasia, smallest of the two Lérins. There were the three holy men who had escaped from the hands of the Moors at Agay; they had taken ship at the port of Arluc, below the Temple, and had told of rites and riotous sounds and the beauty of the priestesses of Venus. And this in the very midst of a tide of holy men, hermits, saints, martyrs, each on a little pedestal in shape of a church, or crouched in a cave in the Estérel. So St. Honorat sent for a most holy mother, the abbess Oratoria, and

she and her nuns swooped down upon the Temple and installed themselves Virgins in stone. Pallid wraiths of the golden glories of Aphrodite's vestals; thin, tortured virginal souls, their gothic folds sedately veiling gothic bodies. Here they flourished on the very threshold of the pagan altar, living a lie to every tenet of the faith and the rites of the great goddess, until vengeance was hurled in the shape of the Lombards in 578. These barbarians ravished and raped and plundered and left nothing but the sacred wood behind them, that sacred "Bois" one day to be devastated by Napoleon. Vengeance fell upon him. You will see how the compromise happened in the end. Saint Nazaire, abbot of Les Lérins in 610 re-established the pious asylum of Virgins, owing to the awful gossip originating from the neighbourhood of the sacred wood.

A rich enchanter, a magician named Cloaster, raised a very beautiful, very unholy altar on the site of the other two. The people, say the old chroniclers of the Lérins, paid homage to an idol—perhaps; anyhow, there was a goat in the plain below and many people "worshipped"; and the dreadful rites took place in the heart of the wood on the hill. Rites we may only guess at; black magic in fact. A young man visited Arluc and its sorcerer and nearly died; saved by the intention of God—and possibly his good legs stood him well. Anyhow, he escaped sorceries and magic and many unknown horrors, and recounted his adventures to the wide-eyed monks on the Lérins. Can you see this—the beautiful young man who but for a miracle might have been lost for ever, and the horrified inter-

ested Brothers listening—all ears—to other mysteries than their's. The abbot was dreadfully shocked: worse than pagan virgins this, much worse! Worshipping a great goat indeed! . . . And he raised such a storm of indignation that the mount was attacked, and every tree burnt to the ground. The altar was smashed to atoms and the chapel dedicated to St. Etienne—first martyr.

The Sainted Abbot once more called upon the holy women—rich ones—and Dame Hélène, Princess de Rietz, built a new convent. And immediately they made a new saint and sanctified her in the new convent—Sainte Maxime of Grasse. And she in turn moved on, into the Var towards the mountains named Les Maures because they are dark hills, and the little lovely port opposite St. Tropeze, on the edge of its waters, is named after her.

But sad to say, when in the year 677 Saint Agulphe came with new energy and reforms to the Lérins, nothing but ruins and desertion remained of this turbulent convent. The curse of Venus made all very disturbed and unsettled and black magic has a direful influence. Once more the abbé rebuilt the Holy Place and incredible but true, noble ladies endowed it. A colony of nuns from Blois, headed by Sainte Agadrême (Angradrême) or Angarisma, descended and inhabited it, in spite of its history. Then these noble virgins under Angarisma took ship to Sardinia as a sort of modernized voyage of St. Ursula—and brought back in triumph the precious relics of some murdered Lérins monks. But who knows this was not some of the black magic of Venus or Cloaster



ST. CASSIEN.

poisoning their minds, making them seek unholy adventure ?

Then was peace, but it was not for long. Suddenly vengeance once more,—this in the year 730, from the hands of the Saracens ; and, says the old chronicle, these barbarians—“ saccagèrent Cannes, Arluc, et toute la contrée.” But with true Christian spirit the convent arose—this religion that throve on oppression—this convent of perpetual oppression ! In 964 we hear of it as a convent under the mother convent of Arles. In 979 the Pope Benoît VII. confided the Arluc convent to the Abbot of Cluny. Once more, the Saracens, established at Fraxinet, overran the country, burning and pillaging, and once more and for the last time, the virgins of Arluc fled before the invaders. Nothing is ever heard from that day to this of the Sacred Convent of the Sacred Wood. And who shall say wherein lies the moral of this history, glowing and vibrant as the atmosphere under the cypress trees that to-day surround Venus’s altar. For the same reason, the Lérins named it later St. Cassien, probably after the founder of the celebrated monastery of St. Victor at Marseilles.

But listen ! Every year, on the 23rd of July, the inhabitants of Cannes encamp all night and all day on the sacred mount, and there are dances and songs and drinking and loving enough to do honour to any pagan goddess. From time immemorial this has been done. And what moral will you draw, or what think ? Venus Immortalis ! St. Jin-Jin ! Carnival ! these are the gods of these people.

During the days of the Revolution the state offered

the chapel of St. Cassien for sale. A member of the district of Grasse and two hundred soldiers went to take over the chapel and its belongings. They were met on their way by all the furious people of Cannes, men and women, armed and on the plain below. The two hundred soldiers and their commander turned and retired to Grasse whence they had come. And into Cannes and up to the safe keeping of the Suquet Church the crowd carried the relics and the treasure of the Chapel of Arluc. Nine inhabitants of Cannes combined and bought the ground for two thousand and five hundred francs, and consented to divide the property with other Cannois. A sort of syndicate was formed to keep the chapel in repair and protect the rows and avenues of cypress trees.

Be alone or with one other, on a day when the trap-door spiders run gently over the ivy on the steep slopes ; when the meadows towards the sea are softly green, covering the ruins of Arluc town ; when the nightingales sing in the sunlight and the moonlight. Be gentle with the ghosts who flit between the long shadows, the white fleeing vestals, the white fleeing nuns ; and arm yourselves with love against the evil that lurks behind the old walls and in the midst of the thick wood.

THE LERINS ISLANDS AND
THE MONASTERY OF ST.
HONORAT

V

THE LÉRINS ISLANDS AND THE MONASTERY OF ST. HONORAT

THE Christian story of these two islands, starts with a myth and ends in a dream, and I have used the dream as a prologue to this book.

These two little islands still hold power but not the far-reaching, spiritual and religious power of the past centuries ; for with the birth of the power of the Lérins grew the importance of the country of the Litoral. The myth is a Christian legend and based on a Provencal habit—that of chatting, interminable conversation continually going on between St. Honorat, the first Abbot, and his sister St. Marguerite. She in her cell and he in his cell, on either side of the Island which was then not divided. Providence and a jealous God thought this was not all in favour of a strict attention to saint life and duties, so the sea was allowed to separate the brother and sister. But once a year “when the cherry-trees blossomed” they were allowed to meet and hold sweet conversation.

And from here started the political and romantic life of Les Lérins which centred in the island of St. Honorat. But the real, civic geographical life of

the Lérins "had been"; had been, in the days before Augustus Caesar. St. Marguerite was the Island of Léro, the Ligurian pirate chief; it was the Georgoan of the Greeks, when St. Honorat was called by them Lérina or Planasia. According to Strabo and Pliny the elder, and others, the Islands were extensively inhabited by Greeks and Romans, and the narrow water now called "Le Frivoul" divided them. Pliny speaks of big harbour works and a port and several towns of importance on St. Marguerite. Certain that the Monastery on St. Honorat was founded in the midst of Greek and Roman remains in 375 and was, during the succeeding years of its growing importance to supply Bishops for nearly all the sees in Gaul.

And here I must tell the story of St. Honorat and his holy guide, Caprais, who under the shadow of St. Léonce, Bishop of Fréjus, lived in complete solitude and contemplation in the grottos of the Estérel mountains, mainly in those of St. Martholémy over Fréjus. As the ideals of solitude demand greater needs and sacrifice, and the eyes of St. Honorat had always before them the cerulean vision of two islands floating in the sea below him, he asked leave of Léonce to instal himself and his saintly guide and comforter on the lonely island; for he felt mountain peaks were mainly accessible, but an island was a defence made by Providence for the elect few who sought peace and undisturbed meditations in what was then a very disturbed world. A world where those who could not fight were killed, where those who would not toil died of hunger; Elijah's ravens existed for the Holy and

retiring few. Let us praise heaven for those quiet wiser men who took the pen with them into their monastic cells where they scratched the doings, or rather the rumours, of the world's doings, and painted each letter of their MSS. as gorgeous as a Southern sunset for the glory of God. Let us dwell romantically upon these monks, putting aside the remarkable works of Mr. Lecky and Mr. Gibbon, who would suggest that the idle in this calling here found their Paradise, that the poor there became as the rich, that the ignorant aped the wise, that the cowards here hid from the brave, and so on.

The presence of St. Honorat soon bathed the atmosphere with holiness and quickly spread the news of his arrival to the ears of his less happy brothers. In little boats they rowed to his island, escaping from grave dangers and overcoming many difficulties. Soon there was a great company, sufficient to found a perfectly good monastery. At the death of St. Honorat another Saint took his place as Abbot, and so on through those ruthless centuries. The monastery had also its moral set-backs, naturally. A Grimaldi Bishop of Grasse asked Monte Cassino, the Monastery near Naples, famous for its discipline and its library, to undertake to re-establish on the Lérins the rigour and purity of the order of St. Benoit. But that was in the 19th century when few monasteries escaped the temper of an age which inspired *Les Contes Drolatiques* and drove Don Quichote to tilt at wind-mills. But it is in its earlier days that the true Christian spirit, the *Thébaïde* spirit, overflows in the blood of martyrs. Old chron-

icles, given to exaggeration when enthusiasm takes a part, speak of three thousand monks belonging to the community. This meant an over-flow into the neighbouring Island of St. Marguerite, where in the sweet-scented shade of her low, bent pines sweeping the water, St. Vincent composed his famous "Commonitoire" in 434; he formulated the devastating law of his creed, the bed-rock of faith, the strongest defence faith has against her only enemy, education, or intelligence. "*Croire sans discussion sans aucune examen du fond de la doctrine.*" Believe and never ask questions. In fact, leave some of that pagan mystery which clings to the aesthetic in all religions. Great old cute men! There is another famous Abbot, one of those who succeeded St. Honorat, St. Loup. He had doings with Attila, the mighty Hun. Attila was cute too, he knew how they argued, how disease, misfortune, etc., were preached as God's will to bring sinners to repentance on a decent endorsement. "I am the Scourge of God," shouted Attila. "Do not then," replied St. Loup, "do ought but obey your Master." The conversation then dispensed with the interpreter.

Followed the dreadful days of the Saracen Invaders. In the 8th century five hundred monks of Les Lérins found their crowns on a lovely summer evening in the year 730. A monk named Barralis has left very "important and very authentic" documents on the subject. He tells how the Abbot, St. Porcaire, some days before, being warned by God in a dream, assembled his "sheep" and proceeded to tell them that soon they might be called upon to fulfil one of their



ISLE OF ST. HONORAT.

vows and to embrace martyrdom. The treasure was buried, and thirteen children together with thirty-six young men were sent to the Italian coast. "And," added the Abbot, "any brother who suffers fear may accompany them." The 500 monks desired to remain, all except two, Columbus and Eleuthere, who promptly hid in a grotto on the rock, called to this day "Bauno di San Souvador." The fatal evening opened in a coral sunset. Saracens armed with scimitar and with flashing pointed helmets, black slaves in turban leading the white Arab horses and others leading slow-blooded camels flooded into the little saintly island. The scene of burning, destruction and slaughter went on rapidly. The young monk, Columbus, in his grotto could bear it no longer. He rushed out and joined the martyrs. The young men were killed and the old tortured; only, says, brother Barralis, four strong young monks "of beautiful body" were kept and taken on board the ship of the Commander. The abbey was looted, the cloister "with marvellously wrought" pillars broken and thrown, with all other objects of beauty or holiness, into the sea.

When night fell and the Saracens left for the shore of Agay, poor, trembling, conscience-smitten Eleuthere crept out of his hiding place and found a little bark to take him to Italy, where he became a Saint on earth, and later returned to the island and rebuilt the monastery in the days when Pépin was acclaimed "King of the Franks and the Country of the Romans."

The memorial of those days remains—their monument remains. The golden, ruined, cloistered tower which seems to lie like a wrecked ship in full sail in the trans-

lucent water below its stone walls; like white wine poured over golden brown mud, the shallow water lies around the tower of the ruined "chateau fort" of the old monastery.

Then followed the days of gratitude, for the island during succeeding centuries became not only a stronghold of faith, but also a sanctuary and sometimes a stronghold of personal safety.

They had done very well, these saintly Abbots, in acquiring land, and with their "rights of way and fishing, of dime, of harvest, wreckage, etc. they did amazingly well. Christianity was at flood-tide. The monks were saints and martyrs—these had lived silently (with I suspect, gentle insistent propaganda)—saintly souls, who predicted the miseries of devastation and conquest as a just punishment to the wicked who dwelt so unsafely and uncomfortably on the mainland.

These predictions culminated in the ghastly stagnant brooding year of 999 the year of the Last Day! The Last Day which the godly had foretold in every chapel, in every church and in castle and at every crossroad.

Only too willing to believe anything, almost willing to accept an unknown end with relief, the tired fearful people, the high and low in the land, sat and waited. No corn was planted, no olives collected, no wine made. The common people made their "soupe" in silence, while the rich wrote, in shocking Provencal Latin, new wills, testaments, and deeds giving their castles, lands, farms and rights, and sometimes their sons, to the Monastery of St. Honorat.

Perhaps they believed their sacrifices or the prayers

of the saints worked the miracle that prevented the Last Day. For at the end of that year, in a bitter cold mistral, old year's night was passed by huddled silent people in the churches, and to everyone's surprise the year 1000 dawned clear and crisp with the first Mimosas and the Promise of the "Moyen Age."

Then follows the stagic 15th century, painted in strong deep colours—a history of galleons and golden sails, red love ribbons,—a glint of armour under a lace collar.

In 1400 the Genoese captured the island and burnt it.

In 1525, the island had been held by the Spaniards for two years, when Francis I. of France, a prisoner after Pavia, on his way to Spain, passed a night in the Monastery, the night of the 21st of June, leaving as a souvenir a very lovely embossed and wrought chest, wherein were placed the treasured relics of the body of St. Honorat, distributed later at the time of the Revolution to surrounding parishes. This happened in 1788 after the Monastery had fallen into very low water. Only seven just monks remained, living peaceably in the large deserted cloisters. The Revolutionary agents took everything, but gave to each of the seven—*les sept parmis les hommes*—1,500 pounds pension apiece; the furniture and the wonderful library of the monastery were divided between them. The sacred relics were also divided—but among the churches:

To Cannes went the chest of François I:

To Grasse the head of St. Honorat:

To Mougins an arm:

To the Cannet an arm:

To Auribeau the jaw.

Poor dissipated Honorat! It makes one a little nervous about the last day of Judgment and Resurrection.

But even then, after the escape from the dreaded 999, the Population did not relax their efforts, and the Monastery found itself with dozens of "maas" (a farm of 15 hectares) to be worked by brothers and those monks in need of change of air. The Abbey became a commercial concern in real estate. In 1050 Guillaume of Mougins and his wife Fida gave everything they possessed to the Abbey. In 1070, thanks to the Berangers, Grimaldis, Asnolf de Biot, De Grasse and others, the great fortified tower on St. Honorat was built, and confidence grew. Throughout the middle ages there was a short breathing space until the Spaniards arrived—and this is for the history of St. Marguerite and has nothing to do with the Abbey. And then came the Revolution which was once more to give back to the common people the lands so long held by the Abbey.

Now comes a strange vicissitude.

The land of St. Honorat was sold to a lady—an actress—Mademoiselle de Sainval of the Comédie Française, who was born at St. Paul du Var, that superb, little, walled hill-town near Vence. Her real name was Marie Blanche Alziary de Roquefort. Sick and tired of the jealousies, intrigues, strivings and arrivings of the French stage world, she bought St. Honorat and lived there like a philosophic dethroned queen, in the west side of the Monastery building.

There is a pretty turn of the tide.

Then the actress died.

How much prayer and what oceans of all the blessed sprinkled waters must have gone to the cleansing of the holy ground, which passed into the hands of a heretic on the death of the actress, the heretic hands of an Anglican minister ! But even Mr. Sims died, and his heirs put St. Honorat up for sale. Sold by the next owner, Monsieur Sicard, the Church once more acquired its lost possessions.

THE SAGA OF STE.
MARGUERITE

VI

THE SAGA OF STE. MARGUERITE

THE giving, graceful pines of the Island, called Ste. Marguerite, were not planted more than a hundred years ago; but, even denuded of these, her special ornament and almost her only inhabitants, it is difficult to imagine how the island in the 17th century was the scene of spectacular battles between the French and the Spaniards. Battles of grand Seigneurs! Forts at every possible place! Infantry entrenchments! Cavalry charges.

This all happened in 1635. On the 13th of September, twenty-two Spanish galleys sailing from Naples hovered around the island. The Commander of the Fort on Ste. Marguerite, Jean de Bénévent, Sieur de Marignac, dispatched a swimmer to the Fort of the Croisette, asking the Fort Commander, Chasteuil, for help. Chasteuil sent back his reply by the same swimming messenger, to the effect that next night the island commander would have men and munitions.

On their way, these troops, being then about a mile from the mainland, again encountered this hardy swimmer, but this time to say the Fort had capitulated. The Spaniards then attacked the Croisette, vainly. They then firmly, and with many new forts, established

themselves on the island. The French under d'Harcourt in the following year, 1636, in the middle of August, with many galleons, sailed to retrieve the lost possession. Was it the blue sky, the delectable summer nights under the Suquet towers, the safe and entrancing beauty of Villefranche harbour and Golfe Jouan, that drew them? Possibly. But Ste. Marguerite remained quietly in Spanish hands. The King wrote furiously, through Desnoyers that if in eight days after the receipt of the letter that part of the French possessions was still in enemy hands, other "esprits," more prompt and better disposed to the undertaking, would be permitted to proceed.

The letter raised a dreadful scandal—and a scene. The two French commanders lost their tempers, and the Maréchal de Vitry beat with his stick the Archbishop of Bordeaux over the head. They blamed each other for the delay, instead of blaming the Midi and its lure. Both gentlemen were forced to retire to their own homes for a short time. But soon, with ships, men, many gentlemen of Provence and long ladders to scale the cliffs, the French attacked: after some weeks of siege a truce was signed in May, 1637. I find in this curious document of the Truce Conditions mention of a fountain on the island. Now, all the water is either conserved from the roofs, etc., or else brought from the mainland. Here are the words of the treaty: "et lorsque celle de la place manquera, les assiégés en pourront venir boire à la fontaine, qui est sous leur entranchements." Has this fountain spring dried up? St Honorat we know has always had wells.

At the expiration of the armistice, the Spanish Captain surrendered. A wonderful 17th century surrender—Chapeaux bas and tambours, flags unfurled; nine hundred men marched out from the Fort Royal, cavalry and infantry; Don Miguel Perez the last to follow, accompanied by fifty-four mounted guards. Arrived in the middle of the island, where Don Perez dismounted, facing the Comte d'Harcourt, the Archbishop, the Comte de Carcès and many other gentlemen, they embraced and made lovely speeches to each other, dignified speeches of congratulation and capitulation; the bells of Cannes rang, the people danced the forbidden Rigaudin, and the great Louis wrote a condescending letter full of very gracious thanks for the “glorious” success of his “vigorous, generous” gentlemen.

The story of the Man in the Iron Mask has through familiarity almost become unknown. One has heard always of this mysterious “mask” and one forgets the dramatic, terrible, incomprehensible story which was enacted in the island of Ste. Marguerite, in the Vauban fortress built on the remains of the rowing school for Roman boatmen.* In the days when even an enlightened and unfettered queen of Sweden got rid of a courtier by the simple method of murder in some one else's palace, when oubliettes were still in fashion, and

*“Utriculares” these boatmen were called. Their barques were mainly wine sacks, filled with straw or blown out, placed between planks, with additional planks over them to form a seat. Possibly, the whole structure was covered by skins sewn together, somewhat like a Canadian canoe. Their lightness made them of great use in navigating rivers and still waters.

even poison not yet relegated to the dark ages, one wonders if anyone but a political hostage could have been held so uncomfortably tormented and imprisoned as this mysterious *Masque de Fer*. The masque happened to be of velvet with a chin piece flexible to enable the prisoner to eat. Why he did not tear it off is a further mystery, for life could have held little encouragement. Yet, there is a square of blue seen through that barred window, of so wonderful a blue, that—who knows—perhaps he looked and looked again, and each day was a square of blue.

It was in the reign of Louis XIV. that this graceful, well-made, male creature was brought to the island in charge of Le Marquis de St. Mars, who himself waited on the tall figure whose face was covered in a velvet mask. The prisoner was always beautifully dressed and deferentially treated, and a few stories leaked out of the Vauban fortress and made the people of the island and Cannes “curioser and curioser.” So much so, and hedged by so much romance was the story, that when the Governor sought for a female companion for the prisoner, a beautiful woman from Mougins was chosen from among many aspirants. Some old papers, especially those of the Lérins, go on to say that when she heard she should never return to the mainland, or indeed, see another soul all her days, the lady of Mougins retired, daunted.

The prisoner’s cell is to-day very much as it was, with its three times barred window and its trap hole to the sea ; through this hole one day he pushed a small silver salver, and God knows what he had scratched all over it.

Only St. Mars knew, for it fell into shallow sea, and a fisherman saw it glisten and took it to St. Mars. "Can you read?" said the Governor. "Unfortunately, no," replied he of the sea. "Fortunately, no," said St. Mars, "or you would have fished to-day for the last time." Then they trebled the window bars. But the Masque de Velours, not daunted, took a fine cambric, frilled, and laced shirt and smoothed out its myriad folds, and wrote thereon and therein and repleated the folds. This was so small, it passed through the narrow bits of blue between the window bars and fell on the rocks below, caught on the spike of an aloe, and fluttered like a flag. A soldier rescued it and took it to the Governor. But, poor wretch, he was unable to persuade St. Mars he could not read, for he died that night. In future, St. Mars himself superintended all the prisoner's laundry.

Legends grow out of all importance we know, but the few stories of the prisoner seem not to have varied through the centuries. Another one, and this again had almost a fatal termination. St. Mars had a friend whose son, not being well, was sent south to the sun and to the household care of St. Mars. The boy wandered along the vaulted narrow corridor and arrived near the open cell door of the prisoner. St. Mars was taking him food and holding conversation with the masque, saw the boy approach, banged the door, and taking the young man by the arm, marched him out into the big garden. But next day he left for home, and in a letter of apology to the father for failing to keep his son as his visitor, the Prison Governor wrote that he feared too much the inevitable consequences if such an accident

was repeated,—“for I have orders to kill anyone who discovers aught of my prisoner.” Not a pretty task for Saint Mars. One wonders why he did it and for so many years. He arrived with his prisoner from Perpignan in 1687 and left with his prisoner, to become Governor of La Bastille, in 1698. In prison, the mysterious one was treated by the old prison doctor. “He examined his tongue and his body but never saw his face, and was entranced by his voice which was full of gratitude and no complaints.”

This creature died in 1703. When he was buried, it was found that his head had been severed from his body. That is one story; the other is that the prisoner died on the island and was buried there. Such a fuss! There must have been some pretty good reason; a pretty good reason for not finding out the reason. Some say, and here history would appear to be reconciled if one can imagine the importance of the situation, that the prisoner was the twin brother of the King, possibly the eldest, for he that is born last is gynecologically the eldest. Why his existence should have been feared to such an extent it is hard to surmise, and therefore this reason does not seem sufficient. In 1789, Grimm writes that “Monsieur de Laborde, ancient valet de chambre” of the King, found among the papers of the Maréchal de Richelieu a letter written by the Duchess of Modena, who was daughter of the Regent. The letter was to her lover, and began in code and appeared therefore to be of great importance. “Here at last is the famous secret! It has cost me very dear, but I have succeeded . . . The Queen gave birth just

as the King was going in to dinner—to a son. The usual fuss and ceremony. Four hours later, Madame Perronet, midwife to the Queen, interrupted the King while he was eating—the Queen's pains were once more upon her! A second son was born, a far more beautiful child and much stronger and bigger than the first. The birth papers were attested and signed by the King, the Chancellor, Madame Perronet, the Doctor and a gentleman who became later, the gaoler of the “Masque de fer”—St. Mars in fact.

If this letter actually existed, it sounds very feasible that the Queen should have given birth to twins, but that the one should have been such a danger as to justify perpetual imprisonment appears ridiculous. The secret apparently was supposed to be passed on from one heir to the throne to another. Louis XV, Louis XVI knew it, up to the father of Louis Philippe. This is authentic and proved, also the reply of the Regent when questioned—“le personnage was of no importance”—which, say the chronicles, he said because he knew it was true, or because he regarded it as of no consequence. Anyhow, it is a good story; one of those that leave an atmosphere, as we found while awaiting a good dinner at the island restaurant. The old guardian with clanking key and the usual rheumatic legs took us into the prison through the “Grand Jardin,” past the well of the Spaniards and the little gate which leads to the woods, through which stout Bazaine pushed himself in his flight. This Maréchal was the last political prisoner on the Island. The old keeper had been part of the prison household in 1870. He took us to the

ramparts near Bazaine's quarters, from which a rope had been hung to give the illusion that stout Bazaine had gone over the side. But it was through the forest gate, explained the guardian, which had been left open by the Captain of the Garde. "Madame—he, this Captain, who was afterwards directeur of the X hotel in Cannes . . . he had his orders, no doubt." Probably he had, and probably the Spanish ship, lying off Golfe Jouan, which proceeded to Genoa, also had its orders, for was not MacMahon first President of the French Republic !

The right and wrongs, understandings and misunderstandings of the Bazaine story are too much of modern history to have reached the period of familiarity. Modern History has hardly yet escaped from the feuilletons of the Memories, Letters and "I remembers" of our fathers and grandfathers ; it is still a question of dragons in shallow waters, of family skeletons kept in cupboards. So Marina thinks that the sojourn in exile in the Ste. Marguerite fortress of Bazaine, Maréchal of France, is worth a few lines of remembrance.

The Empress Eugénie, the Catholic party and some others went to war with Prussia. A very bad idea, thrust upon them as we have found out. Even then it was found to be an undertaking for which France was quite unprepared and which resulted in making Germany into a Nation. Bazaine, and an army of about a 150,000 men, was surrounded and besieged in Metz ; instead of attempting a sortie to relieve Paris, he surrendered his entire army, baggage and arms, after "ignoble" pourparlers. France was furious and hurt,

and Bazaine was court martialled and *saved*! Saved conveniently—a dead man may more easily become a Hero or a Saint than a living man : also a living man makes a good whipping-boy ; and a scape-goat, caught in a good thicket with bars round it so that people may see and watch its torments, is an everlasting monument to prejudice and tradition.

A WALK FROM LA ROQUETTE

VII

A WALK FROM LA ROQUETTE

WOULD you walk in the shades to-day or would you join us, Marina, a Garde Champêtre and a gentleman from Mougins, a landed proprietor, and figuring in the papers of Nice, in police-cases of motor-car accidents or attempted murders, as “un brave cultivateur”? He is one of those happy Frenchmen who pay no taxes, who grow olives and make wine, who drive their mule-cart on the wrong side of the road in the dusk, having no lights, without danger of contravention. He is at once the back-bone and the key to Southern France. He has inherited twenty-five different small holdings from his ancestors and relatives dating from the Revolution; these are scattered all over the country-side, and a great deal of his life is spent in wearily tramping from one property to another, doing a small amount of labour and collecting the various recoltes. To-day he is going to “view” one of those little properties which may have suffered in the great fires of last summer. He has not been able to inspect them since the fire of some weeks ago. The garde champêtre or rural guard, who has been a hair-dresser in a former cycle of his life, is coming with us

for company. He loves a chat, and his work may lead him just as well to the Quartier St. Jean as to anywhere else. He carries always with him a smallish, black bag, which we suspect contains not only a good bottle of vieux marc brandy, but also the implements of his late trade. One always remarks that there is a distinct lack of seven-days-beard on the inhabitants of the fields and cottages after the passage of the garde champêtre. The Southern French in this resemble the Italians; they prefer to be shaved in style; it is a *sâcre*, a ceremony: on these occasions healths are drunk, amusing converse indulged in, occasions for wit and sallies—*galéja*. We three met while drinking beer in the café at the village of La Roquette. Marina, being in their eyes Russian or English, and anyhow mad, may drink beer in cafés: women who wear breeches and garters and tie up their heads in handkerchiefs like any poor creature cannot be regarded as just women. “How far to the old chapel of St. Jean,” I said, after I’d paid for the drinks. “The chapel through the forest?” the guard lifted his dark eyebrows—“Madame is never going there now!” It is almost sunset. Have I the honour to offer Madame a little refreshment? . . . The chapel is far from here and along the worst road on earth,” said he of Mougins, “but I go that way to see a property I have in that direction. It is close to some ground which a neighbour was digging the other day and they tell me he has found some curious coffin which contains bodies and golden vases . . . a pure gold medal too of Roman days.”

There! No where, no how, can one, escape these

Shades. How could one resist such a temptation? The old chapel of the Capucines, who had owned the original farm of La Roquette and a Roman tomb! "We take the old Road from La Roquette through the cork tree forest," said he of Mougins.

Taking the high road from the village with our faces to the sea, we turned off to the right about half a mile from the Café. Here the road or track cut through a plantation of pink May roses on the right, and led apparently through steep, wooded hills to the planes of Laval. These hills might indeed be called the "avant-garde" of the Estérel. These hills loomed before us out of a blue mist of a May evening. A forest of pines on the left. Bracken and fern and a stream edged the track, which followed the narrow defile through the rocky hills; the sweet scent of alpine roses and broom pervaded the air. What more marvellous scent than the alpine rose or cyst? Especially in late afternoon when the flowers of one day's duration fall. White and rose pink!

Suddenly we were in the region of the great fires of last summer; the half peeled cork-trees bearing only small tufts of new leaves. I was in ecstatic admiration; the perfection of landscape was lost upon my companions. They were deep in reminiscences of the fires for which the district of La Roquette is famous.

"Yes, yes," grumbled the garde champêtre, "those fires were as persistent as the evil doings of the Brigands of Pegomas—a one man show too. Ah, when I think of all those shootings, and murders, and robberies; all one man, and he not all there, so they say."

He of Mougins: “ Vouie, vouie, but they also say, chez nous, your Brigands were not quite so stupid; there was some one or a few people who had a grudge against new folk,—estrangers—invading their village, those Macaronis who flood down from the mountains into and over our hills, who will live on the smell of a tomato and yet who dig as well as we—it frightened them—all this lawlessness . . . it put them off! There are no new Italian families making risottos in the Pegomas valley.”

Marina: “ But do they know who set fire to these lovely woods ? ”

Guide: “ Vouie, vouie, Madame.”

Marina: “ Well I hope he has been punished.”

He of Mougins: “ But we know him well. He is quite ‘un bon type.’ Only during summer, he seems to go—drôle—toc-toc . . . not quite right in his head, and he fires the woods. But they are going to shut him up a little during the great heat. (On va lui renfermer un peu pendant la grande sécheresse ! ”)

What a people. Think of last summer! Acres and acres of exquisite forest land! Blazing, crackling, tumbling, spreading. That night in August! There was a gentle “ mistral ” blowing and all day we watched a tower of smoke soaring and billowing to heaven. And in the afternoon, with naked eyes, we could see on the steep slopes of la Roquette long lines of flame and little forms in white rushing hither and thither, lighting the “ contre-feu.” And the pillar of smoke spread into vast proportions. A world of golden smoke and blaze in a golden sunset.



MOUGINS FROM ST. BAZILE.

Then the tocsin rang, all the Roquette bells—S.O.S. bells—we panted up the Roquette hill through the darkening wood-side in the direction of the smoke—soon to be led by the sound of the crackling pine-trees. The sky, dull, dead-blue. The earth in darkness. Forms loomed and moved between light and darkness. And ominous sounds coming from the forest. The chatter of patois from a group who were arranging a counter-fire, under an olive tree the whining of a horse held by a soldier, a black man from the Grasse garrison. Orders, yelled from out of a livid red glow. And little men, little, yelling, jumping men, silhouetted against the glowing mass before us! The Grasse Anamites fighting the flames . . . loathing it. . . . The peasants stood massed, watching: the proportions the fire had taken made their help useless. They watched for stray sparks to be beaten out, and talked quietly among themselves. The village was almost surrounded. The priest was saying “Aves” busily, before the altar of the Capucines’ Chapel. The Mayor, more at home in Provencal, was endeavouring to keep up a polite conversation with me. The yells of the Anamites increased and added to the tremendous scene. The counter-fire was lit before our eyes and like a wild thing let loose, leapt out towards the conflagration beyond. The entire world between La Rouquette, Mouans and Pegomas in the distant valley was ablaze. The edges of the fire saw strange things—the sizzling of a wave of fire over the reeds in a water dyke. A pine tree like a Christmas tree, fresh lit, with candles, only the cones alight. Then hundreds of pine trees with only their cones alight.

Fairy vision. They blazed and died. But below, dreadful, enveloping tongues, loose, mad, wild tongues of fire always dancing and leaping towards the trees. It was like a ballet; single bursts of flame, a sort of eddy: action: form: convulsion: singly and then expanding, the mass suddenly raced towards another mass of convoluting fire, joined and joined again in a long leaping chain encircling the trees. Especially dreadful, some straight magnificent firs, like tall Brunhildes gathered bravely on a small forest mound—defiant. And now the fire surrounded and crept towards them; inevitable end. Slowly it embraced the stems in torturing heat which, suddenly, is too great, and with a mighty blaze the tree leaps into the blue heaven—ablaze from head to foot—high, it shoots up, still straight and tall, and falls out of our sight, into a vast pit of haze and glare. One after another they fall into the background of static heat. Almost solid this dreadful formless mass of heat.

The village is saved, but an officer rides out from the haze and tells the Mayor that the blazing will continue through the forest. Nothing can stop it unless the wind changes. There are fifteen miles of fire.

So we sit through the night, until the wind changes about four o'clock and walk home through jasmine plantations; we see their starry white flowers, but not a breath comes of their heavy white fragrance. The smell of fire is over all our world. But the clean dawn comes flying up from Italy.

Next day and for three or four days, the fire broke loose again—and again the tired peasants and the garrison fought it and won.

And all that is done to avenge this distraction and desolation, is, “*Nous allons lui renfermer un peu, pendant la grande sécheresse.*”

And this is my soliloquy as we walk out of the cork forest through small low plantations of early pink May roses which the peasants are busily gathering.

In this manner we came upon a new vineyard, and, on a higher level lying among scrub, piles of charred, white, brittle bones and broken bits of pottery. Some peasants who had obviously been digging were now gathered together in groups, talking, and talking, and talking—everyone talked. In their midst were the spoiled remains of two coffins made of the baked clay used for the Biot and Vallauris Jarres. These were ornamented with moulded circles. A small girl, seeing us, screamed, “Ah! there are vases inside,” and where the clay, coffin-tiled lid had been broken off, she plunged in her hand. Out came a skull! No vase—a skull. Everyone screamed, and the brittle firebaked Yorrick crumbled among the low, brown orchids and grasses. “But last week there were vases,” the child cried, “I saw them glisten, and there are golden flowers in them, and in one a golden medal with writing on it.” And so on. An old woman whispered, “Yes, she is right, La petite-er, there were vases and a gold medal . . . the peasants shut them up in that little cabin there . . . and now they say that they have been stolen . . . that is because the ‘savants’ came from Grasse, from the Musée, to perhaps take them away. The peasants will sell them themselves. But don’t say anything of this.”

By this time everyone was saying something—saying a great deal—all at the same time, as the Provencal does, and there was no sense to be made out of their tales. I wandered away from the group and picked up some pieces of the broken coffins and some of the bones which I placed in a heap—there in the high field where their bodies and souls lived, for they were not very important Romans, these.* Possibly keepers of one of the post-houses along the Roman road to Horrhea. The bones were those of a man and a woman; one of the lady's teeth was stopped—with gold. She had found this consolation perhaps at Antipolis or more probably at the important town of Ceremelum or Cimiez. She now lay in my two hands—her stopped tooth, the most important part of her!

Those wonderful post-houses; always placed just at a few miles distance along those perfect roads, where fresh horses were always awaiting the hurried traveller, who was thus enabled to cover one hundred miles a day. The records tell me that a traveller along the main Roman roads could average 100 miles a day.

I looked back to the vineyard for my companions. They had disappeared. So in company with my old gossip I walked down a steep path into the place of the Quartier St. Jean in the plains of Laval. And it was here,

* The Romans in Provence buried importantly in stone chambers or in baked clay tile coffins. The pantile or "Tuiles" being exactly the same as are used now on the roofs of real Provencal farmhouses. Called "Tuiles" from the Latin "Tegula."

in the turbulent days after Caesar's death, that Mark Anthony camped with his Macedonian army of cavalry, the 2nd Legion, passing at dawn Vallauris and Mougins on the 14th of March of the year 42 B.C. en route for Fréjus, the limit of Brutus' domination. A dwindled army : only about 3,000 cavalry : anyone met en route was pressed into his service, and from letters written from Fréjus (Forum Julii) to Cicero, even slaves were armed. Mark Anthony's army joined the army of Lepidus the 3rd Triumvir, and this joint army of 70,000 horse and foot with Rome their objective spread over the plains round Mougins on their return march across the Etérel and the march to Antibes and Nice.

Every one knows how Octavius triumphed. How Mark Anthony languished in Egypt. One day in 31 B.C., the sea before Cannes was filled by ships ; strange wanderous ships. Greek ships. Sicilian ships—high turretted Syrian and Phoenician ships, “some having ten tiers of rowers”—bright coloured sails—painted, brilliant ships. Octavius' navy taking the last of Egypt!—in triumph to the Port of Forum Julii.

So Rome pervades my vision and obscures the world of to-day's gossip.

This old lady had discreetly become as lost to me as the object of my visit, to find in a small chapel a certain picture with pretensions to fame. I asked for the key of this chapel at the local shop. Its owner, “Patron,” in open necked shirt and a soapy face ; behind him framed in the dark doorway, the smiling face of the garde champêtre. The soapy face and a great red basin of soapsuds confirmed the

suspensions centred around the nefarious advantages taken by the garde champêtre.

Later, in a café of the Place, I saw "Celui de Mougins" surrounded by his "copins," arranging a game of bowls for the following Sunday.

No vision of Rome or art disturbed the vision of my two fellow-companions. They were of the day, in the day: so I walked home alone with the deep scent of new mown hay and a new young moon for company.

AN INTERLUDE IN MAY

VIII

AN INTERLUDE IN MAY

THESE are the days of Artemis, pale and perpetual: the olive woods and the freshly greened oak woods harbour the nightingales who chant her praises. Below the hills, in the churches of Cannes the white and blue-gowned little priestesses, little vestals, the "Enfants de Marie," are processing to and fro before the rose-wreathed altars of another Virgin. With what inspired tolerance the religion of this world has welded and woven all this business—the intricacies of Virgin moon-goddess, Diana, the month of Venus and her rites, Ceres, mother of newly-born earth-world, and the month of the Mother of God. No wonder the nightingales, those things of nature, as yet uncontaminate, driven to a frenzy of song, intermingle the hours of moonlight and of the sun, for their song escapes from the night and overlaps far into the day.

In the little shrine opposite my studio door is a copy of a Virgin who dwells in the South Kensington Museum; a Virgin with the child in her arms, standing on a young crescent moon. The moon has the face of Artemis, and the delicate feet of the Mother of God are pressing her to the earth; not unkindly, but unconsciously. Nature

has been once more triumphant. Artemis, huntress and fugitive in one, is now only the footstool for a greater virgin, the new Aphrodite, sinning within all the Christian moral tenets, yet escaping all Christian censure. Her halo is a perfect circle, the completeness of the two crescents of Isis, welded and joined ; the completion of being—the reason for being.

She smiles triumphantly, conscious and unconscious, our Virgin. She has dominated Olympus, for *she* is the goddess of Life and Death, and of Life after Death ; she is fulfilment of Hope ; she is Nature and Wisdom ; she is Beauty and Chastity. “What we are, what we were, and what we shall be, and no mortal shall tear aside the veil.”

The olives, Minerva's trees, tolerant of age and imperious, droop silver shade and silver lights around her shrine—dreadful eternal trees, archives of the country side.

FETES AND FRIENDS

IX

FETES AND FRIENDS

“THE love of flowers lingers.” These people really find happiness and pleasure in a bouquet of flowers. I am not sure that the old courting custom of presenting the nosegay does not survive, though the modern Riviera maiden is just as snobbishly shy about speaking the dialect as she is about accepting attentions from young men. From a collection of Provençal customs there is a perfect index of the flower fancies, a recipe for nosegays for special occasions. Here is an old Provençal chanson which gives the lilt—so to say. Forget how Gallien, the Emperor, said, “The Provençals croak like frogs,” for the mistral tongue is beautiful.

*“ Lou proumie jour de mai Larirai
Lou proumie jour de mai
Ai fa’n bouquet à ma mie
Lou latur, lalira, lira
l’ai di : mio tenès Larirai
Va qui la despartido.”*

The flowers for the bouquet were gathered on Saturday

and presented by way of declaration or invitation on Saturday night. Comes Sunday, the day for fête and "les Boules." Comes Daphnis (or Marius) in white shirt and blue trousers, with large straw hat; in his hand, thyme. "My dear, this thyme is a plant which is beautiful at all seasons, but more beautiful when it is in flower. I love you always, but——"

Comes Stephan, (or Marius) again "en chapeau de paille," bronzed and dark, with yellow eyes and black moustache. He brings basil—"My beloved, I bring you basil, as modest as this plant I am, but should you love me——?"

But comes Damon, furious, and leaves at Philomène's window a bouquet of stinging nettles. "You are beautiful, but you will no longer be my friend. My nettles are like you—too many prickles. Best mate with a thistle, my pretty—but not with me."

These were the rendezvous for the fête—to be well or badly received during those wonderful moon-filled nights of May and June.

But gone are the old songs and dances, the dances of Provence wherein lay a literature of a people. In the late seventeenth century, the dance called "Rigaudin" was forbidden on pain of a beating, and later, on pain of death; it being regarded as a public disgrace, so curious were the gestures and figures of the dance. I suspect the Rigaudin of being the remains of a pagan, sacrificial, ritualistic dance, less bacchanalian, more like the curious obscene dances of the Hottentots of Africa, who so oddly resemble the small mountain race which lived in the caves above Nice. Instead, you may now dance

at the fête, the foxtrot and a dreadful form of Jazz, danced amid the dust of a ring of earth enclosed by tenting, with a twentieth-rate orchestra instead of the pipes and drums of the old dances. There is too, the *Concours de chant*. Long, long interminable bourgeois ballads, twenty, thirty verses, a three-parts novel full of dullness ; or in its place an English music-hall tune set to French words.

True, the rough red wine of the country still fires the soul, but there is a “chichi” and important fuss, and speculative parents, and those dreadful artificial silk stockings worn by the maidens everywhere, slow moving white artificial silk legs, in the place of wide-skirted farandole and obscene and exciting *Rigaudin*. The maidens are good looking, Italian and Saracen types ; and the young men dark also, except in cases where they are of Italian descent, when they may be fair and blue-eyed. But the women are far better looking than the men and possess a vitality which no amount of talking or dancing seems to quell. They bear few children, and do a small amount of work in the vineyards and fields—practically none in their homes—so their accumulative vitality escapes in chat.

August is their great moment, for in August there is no work to do, and the short light nights are spent in dancing and song, or in slow drives down from the hills to the sea. It is a month when the drought is at its climax and the high dry air, fanned by warmer Sirocco, withers even the palm leaves, and strings and tunes up nerves and tempers and passions. The old end their days—their prolonged ante-Garibaldian, ante-jazz days ;

they die of age, or drown themselves, weary of too much sun and an empty brain; the young make love and dance and marry, and the others give way to other excesses, drink, crimes of jealousy and revenge. In one hot August week I have helped to drag the neighbouring wells for the body of Gabriel Bertran, who walked out one hot morning into the sun, and out into darkness; and yet that night returning home from the village fair, we almost tripped over the still warm body of Pitagore Ferrero, shot while returning from the fête. Next day we saw the Gendarmes arrest the father-in-law of Pitagore, a great, tall broody northern Italian, accused of the murder, confessing and retracting as the barometer soared or fell. And when the full moon is white over the land and the chicken yards, there is looting and robbing—chickens, rabbits, grapes; and should you shoot—for there is always an old gun handy—be careful your shot meets its mark on your own boundary and not on your neighbour's; for the one is legitimate defence, the other is murder. Moonlit summer nights are busy and disturbed; the dogs are so jumpy and fidgety that their warnings are unreliable, and based on shadows mostly, or perhaps they really do see the silent forms loading stolen grapes into a push-cart. Oh! August is a jade of a goddess.

I have known a murderer intimately. A respected man of the village, this landlord, big and stout, full of goodwill and good wine, well-off too, otherwise, even with the leniency of a Southern French jury, he might have passed more than a few months in the Nice Gaol. One summer's evening, during the fête, he shot



A VILLAGE PLACE.

his mistress under the lime trees. She had perhaps been unfaithful! She worried him for more money. He wished, perhaps to marry and settle, and she worried him: she was not reasonable, and "he had treated her very well." The jury quite sympathized, and the French habit, called for convenience *Le Système D*, stood him well. By this system one may get passports arranged in ten minutes, instead of ten days; one may get motor papers in one minute instead of six months; one may never pay taxes; one may turn an enemy into a friend; one may buy silence from a Provencal, justice from a Parisian; one becomes a Mayor, or a senator; or a President; or a bandit, who never is arrested. *Système D*, apotheosis of corruption; the corruption of *Beaurocracy*. Beastly, money-grubbing, little men, pot-bellied, with big intelligences and mean hearts; preposterous and brave, determinably rude and aggressive. The "*Bourgeois Bureaucratie*" of France: her danger, her end perhaps.

Once upon a time, there was beauty in France; on her lands they built beautiful monuments, lovely churches, splendid palaces, charming old stone Maas, and farms; once upon a time there was courtesy and politeness in all ranks of French life; an integrity of character and a certain national generosity. Now—there is patriotism and intelligence, and that dreadful stinginess and caution that makes for ugliness of form in nature and in art.

Aristocracy of thought or action is looked upon with suspicion and lives in isolated retirement and resentment, while *Système D*, thrives.

ON VINEYARDS

X

ON VINEYARDS

THE vineyards are laden with young grapes, their leaves iridescent with the invigorating powder of sulphur and the Persian blue copper-sulphate which lie thick upon them. Under the great cherry-trees, two great earthen pots or "jarres de Vallauris" look like Persian pots of Omar, with the blue liquid oozing and trickling over their opaque surface—for here the peasants keep their store.

Soon will be on us the quick feverish days of the vintage, when the fruit of the years of man's labour will from the feet pass into the stomach, for his consoling.

On all the old peasant farms they tread the grape—in the deep cool cellars with decay and rot and rust around where all the changes of nature take place in the darkness, here they tread and squeeze the grape; here the juices ferment; here they strain and bottle. Bustling business! Then after a time, the disturbed dust and spiders' webs and the leaving and breedings of ages once more settle gently and inevitably over the silent cellar. There is a quality in dust and rubble; there is an atmosphere and there is a magic, without which

wine loses its personality. Garnished, polished cellars, scrupulous as in a hospital, seem too new, too domineering for the conscious dreadful fermenting of the wine. For its mysteries it seeks quiet and darkness. As you would leave a brooding hen, fixed, hypnotised in her task, intent on her eggs, in some quiet darkened place, so, you will leave the wine to its methods; to peace and its own methods in its own time with no prying.

There is magic knowledge found in ancient husbandry : magic, for it is knowledge inherited from those who told the stars. Among peasants this magic is common knowledge. Where is the scientist who will tell why on the fifth day of the moon storms and rain will fall to damage new-turned ground ? Who shall say why vines planted on the seventeenth day take well ? Who knows why ? Again, but this is simple to explain, the ancients feared to plant a vineyard to face the setting sun. They said and we do, " Plant vines on a slope, and plant wild vine and graft."

This is the first labour of the vine ; every year two or three times, the soil is dug, loosened and hoed—the hoe with head reversed. Now leaves appear, and fresh green shoots and tendrils—garlands, they form. These are gathered in and tied ; in some cases all brought together over the vine to shield the tender branches of flowers from late storms. Now the vine is sulphured ; bright yellow vineyards greet your eyes this day—iridescent yellow acres. Again, upon another day, the vines are turquoise blue with copper sulphate sprayed. Then, said the ancients, or " les Bons Vieux " as the peasants call them here, then,

“Be first to delve the ground,
Be first to cart the prunings,
Be first to house the poles,
But
To gather in, be last!”

And there's the rub! And there's the thrill! How late to leave your gathering, e'er the rains fall and the vintage be lost!

Virgil says, and the gods know, Theocrites certainly said it before him, and someone before him, and we perpetuate their words——

“Plant the wild vines near the spot where you will graft. Mark, too, the trace of sun upon the bark, that as each stood before, facing north or south, so they will stand again.”

And what of the soil? If heavy and flat, plant thick; if in steep slopes, be free with space and see when you plant that all your lines be true. Line after line, in parade, dispense equal justice to every plant. The trench need not be deep.

Now Virgil's vines grew high, and clung and twined from tree to tree in heavy garlands. Here they keep, with pruning, near the ground, and find this way the sun's work manifold—low, heavy, purple branches, all trailing to the earth. But sometimes, and here you see the hand of him who hails from Nimes or Italy, the vines are trellaced-trained, in avenues of wire, straight and overmeeting, intertwined; sometimes slantways to catch the even rays of sun, but these are mainly vines for market purposes and are dressed in paper bags to shield the grapes from cold and frost.

When the wine is pressed and placed in casks there is a faint echo of the Bacchus festival—no slain goat upon the altar, few songs, no dances ; but neighbours come around the autumn fire to taste the new wine ; rich, fermenting, sparkling stuff. Round the cellar door, under trellis, seated at a little outdoor table, the new wine is drunk and its maker's health is asked. Even then the thing is not complete. From the sediment they distil most secretly a pungent dreadful spirit, the Maac. The liqueur is used for ills and pains, and on cold winter mornings before market carts and trams are sought. Its innumerable degrees of alcohol run a pleasing warm melody through the veins. It is drunk on a frosty morning, or at night round the smoking pine log fires, whose enveloping plaster cowl, as used by the Romans, lets in the air and keeps in the smoke.

SERTORIUS CAMP ON
CASTELLARAS NEAR MOUANS

XI

SERTORIUS CAMP ON CASTELLARAS NEAR MOUANS

THE Roman matrons were not without sentiment and romance—one thinks of them perpetuated in dignified stone, seated, triumphant in “noblesse oblige,” almost “purdah” in the secret lawful defences of their lives and homes. There was, however, a lady Raielia, who came from perhaps Antibes one hot summer to the cool heights of the hill between Mougins and Grasse, called Castellaras. Here the great General Sertorius once had his camp to watch the seaboard while Marius beat the Teutons beyond the Alps. Other Colonial Roman ladies and their families moved to the heights of these old Ligurean camps during the hot weather, but here, at Castellaras, Raielia had the misfortune to lose her son, Quinto Luccunius Verus, and made him a monument. This lives in stone, punctuated with engraved cypress trees and hearts; yet full of dignity and mourning are the words—with the dedication to the gods of the household—Les dieux Manes.

A. D. M.

*Respice, proetereius, ora Titulum,
Dolebus, arum, Promaecture nimium
Sim Mortis adeptus. Triguila, an
Dorum, Rapta, est miti Sux gratissi
Ma vitae et de gente mea solus sine*

*Parvolo quem Mater miserum
Flevit, quod pictatis Honore Relicta
Est Q. Luccunio vero
Ravelia segundina Mater
Filio pissimo Fecit.*

To-day the new owner at Castellaras has placed the stone in the wall of his library—though any corner of the old house or grounds is a worthy background for the hearts and the cypress trees that tell of Raielia and her heart. Or was it that she found a slave to do the work, and the slave was a sentimental slave? for who was sentimental enough in those days save the northern people—as they are still in their snows and forests. Little hearts and cypress trees—hieroglyphics of international southern mourning! But somehow, strewn among those dignified classic Roman words, they seemed paradoxical. Yet again I remember the few words on the Mougins memorial stone, half-buried in the dark chapel at Nôtre Dame de Vie. . . . “To Flavia who lived so short a time.” They breathe strength and feeling, but the other dedication, that to Raielia’s son, has a poetry which is not Roman.

Castellaras is for us a lighthouse rising out of the Colonial Roman life, with a distinction and a very definite meaning. The General, Marius, was sent from Rome into Provence to stem the threatening overwhelming Teuton tide. Marius was as a god-deliverer, a saviour, to the terrified Provencals: every boy child born in those years, and nearly every boy child born since those years, is named Marius.

One of Marius' Captains was that celebrated Sertorius, who later, in Spain, played a rôle against his chief. He was left here by Marius to guard the mountain passes and chose for his camps the high commanding hill, called later *Castrum Sertorii*, choosing the old Ligurian hill-camps for his other outposts—*Encourdoules* near *Vallauris*, and *St. Vallier*, high up in the mountain plains above *Grasse*. Here *Paul Goby* finds neolithic dolmens and tumuli amid the débris of stone Ligurian walls. Thus history honeycombs through a former history and builds its monument upon more ancient stones, until the peasants who inherit the earth, and all that is on it—which they can get at—come quietly, day by day, and take the stones away to build a new barraque for themselves.

So Sertorius on Castellaras dominated the wide sea-plane which unrolls in gentle low hills from *Nice* to *La Napoule*.

Stand on a summer's evening, when fireflies signal their lights in the shadows of the cypress trees planted by the monks who came to breathe cool air from *Les Lérins*, and through the great oaks which grow inside the circular walls; watch *Nice*, white and paling blue into the sea

mist, the red roofs of Antibes and its towers catching a last sunset ray, the darkening coolness of the Gorge du Loup above like a deep purple rent in the high mountains, the deep wooded mysterious valleys of the river foaming and opaque, falling and tumbling down to Cagnes and the marshes before the sea. Look how the huddled, frightened-looking village of Valbonne hugs itself more closely ; so closely that hardly a light shows ; for once in old days, the limits of the village were defined in a perfect limited square and no house has since passed that confine. So huddled are its high houses that no sun passes into its narrow streets, no matter what season of the year, and except for its low arcaded Place, painted in green vine leaves, there is little air. Then turn leftwards, towards the lights of Grasse—Grasse, like a decked languorous woman, lying back—her jewels sparkling and flashing—vying with the stars ; above show the few lights of Cabris pointed and aloof ; further those of St. Cesaire, high and certain of their importance ; and towards the sea and the Estérel the outline of the coast darkens against the luminous silhouette of the sea. The little owls of Anthene break the immense silence.

THE ANCIENT CHAPEL OF
NOTRE DAME DE VIE

XII
THE ANCIENT CHAPEL OF NOTRE
DAME DE VIE

SHOW me a spot where time is held by peace and happiness, where desire dies in the arms of content.

Here—under the thick cypress of Nôtre Dame de Vie—where the view of the world is spread out below and around, like a coloured map, and the prayers of thankful peasants hover in half-articulate flight to some celestial throne among the great white clouds, wherein is a Blessed Virgin appearing at psychological moments on the receipt of these messages of faith!

*A Nôtre Dame de Vie,
O Vierge Advocate de Mougins,
Pleine de Grâce, toute belle,
Préservez désormais de grêle
Nos fruits, et ceux de nos voisins,
En reconnaissance éternelle
Nous viendrons en procession
Deux fois l'an à cette chapelle
Louer votre protection.
Ex voto de la paroisse de Mougins,
1670.*

Engraven on the stone tablet to the left of the altar, this votive offering gives the clue to the curious collection of pictures, mostly by the hands of the faithful, dotted about the thick Roman walls of the chapel.

Hail is the deadliest weapon nature uses against the peasant. A hail storm in May, and the flower of the vine is scattered over the hard earth, and the hopes of a good "vendage" go with it. In the year 1670 the country-side, laid out so orderly and exquisitely below us, was swept by dreadful storms. Curiously enough, I have noticed that the ominous clouds, which gather in from the snowcapped Italian Alpes when the chill little damp wind from Corsia drives them quickly and heavily up to Grasse, are spread in dark golden circles to the west and to the south, and so back to the east, and we smell the rain: but Mougins and its hills and valleys seems to sit untouched in the midst of this nature schema. Many a time I have watched storms encircle and avoid. This is due to the lie of the land; the playground for clouds along the long valleys, stretching from Grasse through forests to the sea at La Bocca, and on the right through Le Cannet to Cannes.

The chapel of Nôtre Dame de Vie, so called because the chroniclers of the Lérins constantly refer to Mougins as Villa-Vetus (or Monasterium) for no apparent reason except that the Seigneur of Mougins offered to the abbey half his possessions. Roman-Provencal in style, dull red, pantiled, the roof edged with whitened tiles called "Genevoisie," forming a scalloped, fringed decoration. The chapel is attached to a smallish building obviously used by the monks as a place of retreat and is now falling

into ruins with a hundred and one faded colours, in roof, and walls, and painted shutters—a rhythmic whole wherein tones of Provencal paint, made of earths, red, blue and yellow, play their quick, harmonious scales with much discretion, no doubt aided by time. This picture of moral peace and saintliness is painted in two rows of superb cypress trees, and massed by oaks, which form a hedge beyond the cypress. From here is a view of the world. The narrow, deep Canal of the Siagne follows the contour of the Hermitage hill. Opposite, perched perpendicularly on its own particular hill, is the town of Mougins, once the Ligurian stronghold. The curé of Mougins will tell you this is a town without any interest. He is almost right and yet so wrong. Of Mougins more anon. For while the light is still good, armed with the huge key lent by the curé, let us go inside, into the chapel of Nôtre Dame and read and see the votive offerings with which the walls are plastered. Here is the faith, superstition, literature, and art of a peasant people.

Take care that in the darkness of the vestry you do not fall over a slab of Roman memorial tablet—“To Flavia who lived so short a time.” Oh, these intellectually dramatic Romans! . . . To a collector of glass pictures it would appear that he had come upon a mass of such, for these votive offerings are painted by the offerer—apparently on glass or on canvas well glazed. Some date from the early 17th century and give an idea of the interiors and costumes of the peasants of that day, some are like first-empire aquatints, with recognisable local dwellings and land-

scapes. Usually the miracle of life preservation is the subject, with directions underneath the picture as to how it happened, and always above in the clouds, the apparition, bust length, of the Blessed Virgin, through whose intervention "such a one has been saved from infallible death." They are naive and completely adorable, these votive offerings, and merit a better attention and care than dust and crumbling frames and walls can supply.

Now the departing sun sends a last ray through the small barred west window: it falls on the child Gillian kneeling on the altar steps. She feels called upon to pray and confides that all she could think of was "Our Father." Being a mother the Virgin could not be hurt by this slight, she thought.

Later we carried the great heavy key up the opposite steep hill to Mougins, red-capped in the sunset; this effect of the setting sun on the crest of the village gave rise to a conjecture as to the derivation of the word "Mougins,"—i.e. Mons Ignis, or fire hill. But much the most feasible etymology is the usually accepted one which I have mentioned before, that the Ligureans and the Décéates, expelled by the conquering Roman from Cannes and the neighbourhood, settled in the village and made it their capital, calling it in souvenir Mons Egitna. In all the Roman records this important town is referred to as Mons Egitna.

During the Middle Ages Mougins formed part of the possessions of the Prince of Antibes, one of whom, Guillaume and his wife Fida, gave in 1036 the castrum of Mougin and its territory to the Monastery of the

Lérins. Mougins possessed several noble families and the town was of importance in the middle ages, being the seat of a judge whose jurisprudence extended over Cannes. They were savage fierce believers these Mougins Antibes nobles, or else time has maligned them; for I find one of these gentlemen forced his wife to eat her lover's heart! A very loathly form of vengeance.

South East of Mougins where there are now swampy lands, was a lake where eels abounded, and wild fowl shooting was a favourite winter sport.

Mougins has alluvial ground:—at one time the Valauris potters exploited an aluminium mine in its neighbourhood, but one wiser than his friends sent some of the soil to Marseilles where from the mineral extractions he drew considerable benefits.

In about 1870 a mass of lithographic stone created enough excitement among the geologists to send a batch of moustached scientists hurrying second class from Paris to report on the extraordinary stone. From old reports, they were unable to label it and returned disconsolate. The hill of Mougins to the South West is riddled with curious shallow caves where the earth and rock appear to be of volcanic substance.

In the old Place of the village is a café kept by a charming Nicois family where one may enjoy perfect omelettes and garlic salad, while watching the great gleaming snow field in the sky over the Italian Alps, a reflection one sees in Switzerland on dark nights, reflection in the sky of the snow like a luminous, thick fluid above the snow mountains. Here, in the Place overlooking sea and land is the statue of the Command-

ant Lamy, he of Fashoda fame, a child of Mougins. In summer, while the valleys and seaboard register 100 degrees of heat, Mougins, from its cool altitude, is never too warm, only unfortunately, like all these hill-towns, uncomfortably crowded. Deep narrow streets, whimsical in plan and design, following the original of all streets, i.e. short cuts to important spots; short cuts made by timeful people who took the easiest way in lieu of the shortest; even the Romans had to follow the tortuous, slow, short-cut paths. They are banked and guarded and clouded and skied now, by high steep houses whose narrow roofs tiled with oval, convex, sunbaked tiles are underpinned by more tiles in three tiers, washed or whitewashed. An accidental, forged-iron balcony, projecting and decorated with growing vines; an ogive window in stone capped with a rubbed coat of arms; a yellow curtain and a pot of flowers; deep vaulted door-ways; thick carved wooden doors, silver-hinged sometimes, bolted and barred, keyed enormously, opening on to stone stairs or wooden ones; vaulted or beamed ceilings, high and low rooms, red-tiled, red-washed or white; old Roman tower; city walls; and postern gates, Roman church with gothic window, fountain, plane trees with trunks like tame zebras in a row, a million dogs and some smells. And here is the recipe for a town on the hills around Cannes—on the low hills where the towns partake of civic life and are not atavistic mountain fortresses, whose warlike stone gateways are as crumbled as the sainted, moulding machoirs of the saints who protected them.

This walk through old Mougins inside its walls has tired

you ? Would you eat quails à la Provençale for dinner ? Then hurry down the hills to the cross roads, near the chapel of St. Bazil where the ways to Valbonne, Castellaras, the Golf Links and Antibes meet and part, and there beg the Patronne of a little way-side public house, to allow you—but, no, useless, she does not know you and will offer you a soupe à poireaux. . . .

Therefore, e'er it is quite dark, hurry along the Grasse road, past the old mill of the Cross, to the tram-line, or let your Rolls Royce whirl you along the pretty Cannel road below Nôtre Dame, which will lead you to the Boulevard Carnot, and so to Cannes.

THE AURELIAN WAY
THROUGH VALLAURIS

XIII

THE AURELIAN WAY THROUGH VALLAURIS

THE sun was scorching hot through the scant pines on the hills of Encourdourles ; there was clear blinding heat all around, nothing seemed to pierce it, no air, nor sound, save the shrill cicada. The town of Vallauris, lying in the hollow between Encourdoules and the sea-hills of Golfe Jouan, was like a dull red and yellow clay Roman tile, flattened and baked in the sun : the sea seemed stilled into a solid blue sheet of glass crossed by a long white vein of current, caught back from the hot sand edges of Jouan les Pins. It was a heat almost of creation—of conscious new matter, forming above the dead sun-killed earth : of static force overheld : we ourselves burnt out into ghosts of ourselves, drifting to meet other ghosts in a common hell—sharing a common knowledge, a common want and common memories. It was with difficulty that I drew back from this oblivion to gaze once more on the landscape. The stony, slippery, narrow Roman road was below me. I had followed it from the main road, up from Vallauris, through the pines, past the farm and the site of the Chèvre d'or, the golden goat once worshipped in these hills. “An old legend” said

Monsieur de Vallauris, whom I found counting the minutes outside his farm house,—counting the moments or the years or his chickens, under his fig-tree.

“How many years since *they* tramped Gaul?”

“Pardon, Madame; Pardon;—They? How, which, they?”

“Yes, how long since they worshipped the golden goat, here, on your farm?” (Silly old man, stop counting the minutes left you of your life and watch with me the Roman legions coming from Cemelenum over Nicia.)

He smiled and replied to my question with a dogged determination to sit in judgment. “Long ago my Professor told me something, so long ago, I forget, but I have as a boy thrown stones down the well of the golden goat, the ‘*chèvre d’or*.’ There seemed no bottom, yet—— I remember that there was a passage from here, and the other end of the passage was down by the sea-shore, over towards Antibes.” I looked towards the sea following his words with my mind. The town towers of Antipolis, red and tall against the sea, topped the neat-walled pinkness of the town roofs. Here at Encourdourles they had made Roman camps, for the hill dominated the Alpes Maritimes world—the world Marius was watching; the world Septonius had been set to guard; the great passes of the Alpes Maritimes—those barriers of the Barbarians. And came a mirage of men, hot, dark, strong men, helmeted, armoured, speared, and daggered, eagles aloft, bear-skin unloosened hanging from a shoulder, swinging slowly up the slippery stony road from Cimiez, from Augustus La Turbie,

towering white and golden on a pinnacle—from Rome large and omnipresent. Along the Aurelian way hedged with flowered white and green myrtles, blue agapanthus flowers, and fig-trees; they passed—"Our helmets scorched our fore-heads"—"Our sandals burn our feet." They unhooked the helmets. Soon these sparkled on the short stick used for carrying their belongings, dangled and shimmered, like silver balls in the air. The sweat dripped on to the hide and steel body armour, yet they swung up in a burning glistening line of tramping men in the great fierce rays of their sun god—following him to his setting, from Rome into France.

"When I left Rome" sang one, in a slow measure—"When I left Rome for Lalage's sake. By the Legions Road—By the Legions Road." The soldiers took up the strain in a sort of chanting speaking voice; sound, but no tune. They chanted in a chorus, with a syncopated rhythm, taken from the music of Africa which went well with their slow march: not all the Legions knew this rhythmic music—these must have been in Africa, and were now apparently marching through France to Britain. After the chorus the first voice rose again with the verse——

"When you go by Via Aurelia
That goes from the city to Gaul,
Remember the luck of a soldier
Who rose to be master of all.
He carried the sword and the buckler,
He mounted his guard on the wall,
Till the Legion elected him to Caesar,
And he rose to be master of ali.

It's twenty-five marches to Narbo,*
 It's forty-five more up the Rhone,
 And the end may be death in the heather,
 Or life in an Emperor's throne."

And so it seemed they chanted as we watched them along the Aurelian way. That night they would lie in Forum Julii, Augustus' sea port, over the Estérel; and so on to Aix, Lyons, and then the North, and the cool mists, and a day worth four hours' of sun; and so up the damp green Island to the great Wall and the Heather and the Picts and the Norsemen, and strife and strain in Maximus' endeavours to hold the northern Empire—perhaps it would be gone e'er they got there, for later they added to the song——

"And I've lost Britain,
 And I've lost Gaul, and worst of all
 I've lost Lalage."

Monsieur de Vallauris, the farmer, beside me, picked some figs from his overshadowing tree: "Great Rome," he said, "I go to lay these now on the little altar of Pipius, over on the hill of the Pioulet—for their safe journey," he continued as if a necessary explanation was due to me, for up till now, I, not knowing his name, had called him Monsieur de Vallauris and had not associated him with Romans or so strangely sounding a god as this Pipius.

"Pipius is he who protects chickens, and all young things," said he smiling, "and up in the Quarter Pertuades is his altar—they say the Greeks placed it there—

* Narbonne.

but I do not see the inconvenience in asking him a safe journey for young men of great Rome."

He raised his hand in salutation and shuffled off with his figs, into the haze of Vallauris and the Road, and I was left with to-day alone.

ON THE ESTEREL

XIV

ON THE ESTEREL

SUPERSTITION and sacrifice are two of the legacies left by the Greeks in this land, and I have remarked that after the coming of the Christian spirit, there arose a sort of shyness about the mention of such things as pertained to the old religion ; for though the old altars and temples could be adapted to their new needs, they dared not mention the name of the deposed gods or goddesses. It is for this reason one finds scattered all over the country, Fountaies des Fées, Mountaignes des Fées, Grottes des Fées, etc., etc. These fountains, grottes and mountains had once been named after the then presiding deities.

On the Estérel was a temple to the goddess of forests, to whom the mountain was consecrated, and the temple was called Diane Estérelle. There was pain of death imposed upon any one who touched a tree or plant on this sacred mountain. Or is this hypothesis all wrong, and perhaps the truth will more lately be found in the upside-down acts and doings of the hermit Armentan who lived in the middle ages, who writes that the people offered sacrifices to a malignant spirit, the nymph Estérelle, and that sterile women drank a sacred drink

concocted on the mountain which rendered them fertile. Possibly the Fée Estérelle existed in her magic beauty long before the Greeks or Romans appeared and was at once a terror of superstitious dread and magic endowment to humans. The old chronicles refer always to the Estérel as "The Mountain," and seeing that this gorgeous, graceful mass of rock and tree was dedicated to a goddess, I shall continue the flattery and speak of this small range as "The Mountain."

For centuries an impenetrable boundary and protection from the mainland, "The Mountain" rises from the sea to a height of hundreds of feet of porphyry, mica, jasper, quartz of all colours, and a sort of granite known and used by the Jews and called "ligure," as it was only found along the Ligurian coast.

The colour of the Estérel is golden and bright rose-colour, almost red. It is a climax of glory to see a sunset, or a sunrise along its southern slopes; the glowing colour deluges the rocks and pinnacles until they appear as memorials bathed in blood—the blood of sacrifice, the blood of war, rising to heaven in the fires of the greatest god. Here was a spot for the spirit in excelsis; the enthusiasm of nature towards the spirit; sensed and held for a few rapturous moments: as when in the grotto or cave called Sainte Beaume, the Mithraic worshippers, assembled round a stone altar in the darkness of rocky walls below their temple to the god of light, watched the narrow arrow-like opening through which the glorious ray of the departing sun fell into their dark waiting place for perhaps three minutes of blessing, and as suddenly faded. And while they watched, the rocky

opening closed on the luminous darkness of the southern blue night-sky. Thus they worshipped, having chosen a great moment for their mysteries. The stone altar bore the name of Aralucis, until Saint Honorat, founder of the famous monastery of "Les Lérins," used the cave as a place of retreat. Later it served as a hiding place to the many monks, hermits, and holy fathers escaping slavery in the hands of the Saracens. From that time the grotto became known, and still is known, as "Sainte Beaume."

There was yet another temple that once reared tall and glistening from the red peak over Anthéor, a temple built by the first Marseilliens, and dedicated to Pallas Athene. The peak is called Montubis, corruption of Mont Urbis, or mountain of the town that grew and flourished on the sea-coast below. Here was a branch of the Aurelian way, before it reached Agay and turned further inland. This had also been a Greek roadway to Cannes. Until some sixty or eighty years ago the peasant people of the district still called this part of the road "Camin Aourélien." Somewhere, as yet undiscovered by Marina, should be the remains of an amphitheatre which was called "Maoupey," which signifies "bad ground" or "inaccessible country"—corrupted into Malpey. Here in a neighbouring valley many Roman and other remains have been found. At Agay, further along the coast, where the precipitous hills leave the sea-board and undulate gently towards the main block of mountain in green slopes and plain, on the shores of a large, generous, blue bay, the Greeks made their most important trading station,

or "Comptoir," dedicated it to Minerva, and named it Agathopolis.

So the mighty nature-silences of the Estérel were not always so. It is pleasant to hear the chatter of the Greeks along the coast of Agay, and to watch the processions and pastimes, and the festivals of Athens, under the tall olives which grew among the forests of cork and oak trees, rooted amid asphodel and fern. And it is good to hear the rhythmic tread of the Legions marching from Forum Julii (Fréjus) along the Via Aurelia to Antipolis (Antibes). The legions of Julius Caesar, the legions of young Sertorius, with those of Marius the Proconsul; the legions of Augustus, keeping the law and the order that closed the doors of the temple of Janus for so many fruitful and stupendous years. But with one's face towards Cannes, facing the tall silhouetted temples, rearing on the peaks and dominating the sea-border, one sees the conflagration of Barbarian invasion; one sees fleeing dark-robed monks, tonsured and scattering like frightened rooks—black, flying robes beating the air in precipitous flight as in the Capaccio picture in Venice—the monks fleeing before the fierce unchristianised lion of St. Jérôme—refuged inside pinkly painted convent walls, up fascinating Italian exterior stairways into pillared loggia, and into tower and red-roofed walls. Here, it was into cave or up high peak, or into the depths of a glade where wolf and boar trod through the rose-coloured Cyst—others, flying to the sea, from red-rocked cove sought sail and boat, and in the darkness found sanctuary in the arms of their happier brethren on the Lérins Islands. A new Thébaïde this, which no one has painted.

Then we see and hear the armies of the Emperor Charles V, lost in the haze of pathless rocks and forest between Grasse and the Estérel, driving before them the fugitive peoples, escaped from burned and ruined farm and town. And finding no better way of certainty of conquest, Charles set fire to the mountain and burned hundreds of inhabitants. But a dreadful vengeance overtook the Emperor—a vengeance wrought here in the steep narrow passes adapted to guerilla warfare. Having arrived at Aix and crowned himself King of Arles and Provence, he found his army dying of hunger with no reinforcements in sight, and a huge French menacing army at Avignon. He was forced to return whither he had come, recrossing the ominous Estérel. Here was vengeance. In the narrow defiles were gathered the peasants of the suffering towns of Grasse, Auribeau, Cannes, and other villages. They attacked the advance guard, the rear guard, and the flanks of Charles' army, safely from behind their inaccessible rocks; in league with the fairy of the Estérel, the peasants hurled destruction on the army of the Holy Roman Empire and of Spain, and that way 20,000 soldiers perished. The Emperor arrived at Cannes almost alone, and in a small fishing boat sought safety in Nice.

Until lately there was a tower of the Middle Ages to be found on one of the points of the mountain. From here, the wretched Queen Jeanne hid, while escaping from the hired assassins of Durazzo. The story of this Queen of Naples, and Countess of Provence, is so dramatic and so tremendously tragic, that as Mr. Gibbons

used to say, "for my own pleasure I will recall it." A digression from Estérel, but excusable, for above us is the ruined tower. Before reaching the summit of the road to Fréjus on what was once part of the Aurélian way, on the road, almost at the entrance to the mountains, when the road rises and climbs steeply to the pass above the plains of St. Raphael, one may stop before the old inn, under the shade of four gigantic and extremely old elms. Over the inn door is an inscription bearing this information—that in 1663 "*ceste maison a esté rebastie par le Sieu Langier.*" It is now known as the "*Auberge des Adrets.*" There was once near this inn a mine of sulphur lead which was used by the potteries of Vallauris. And, say the old papers I have before me, the prices of this inn were so exorbitant that there passed a saying into the language of the country : when anything was charged excessively high, it was said, "*Oh, c'est l'Estérel.*"

Indeed, it would seem the malicious fairy is still having her "*galéja,*" as the joking Provençal says, and has invented a proverb which is more in the manner of a way-side Roman stone : for the kindly acceptant people in whose blood is the tolerance of the foreign invader, have grown to take with a smile as much as may be given, or got. There might, with great reason, be placed this warning, where the Route Nationale leaves the mountain to traverse Nice and Monte Carlo—

" *C'est l'Estérel.*"

Under the gigantic elms, bolsted and creted up with cement to defy more years, will you drink an infamous



NOTRE DAME DE VIE, MOUGINS.

vermouth, while I delay you with the story of Jeanne who ruled over all that one may see from the heights of the Estérel and beyond, where the Corsican mountains remind one of another more lonely island, further south. Those were the days of romantic history—the islands in the Mediterranean counted when Majorca was a kingdom, when Sicily stood for art and learning, and Sardinia held court's festival. It is not usual for the cold, bloodless literature of a dictionary to stir the imagination, but in this case, the story of this unhappy and beautiful lady of the Middle Ages wants little else to make a tragedy from the authentic prescription of facts.

History is strewn with Jeannes, unhappy queens mostly, mad and bad and unfortunate, but none such as this Jeanne, she of Sicily and Naples, Countess of Provence in her own right, daughter of Charles, King of Sicily in 1327. She was a beautiful, elegant, fascinating woman, clever and brilliant, and full of the temperament that goes with all this brilliance. Seeking, always seeking some happiness, and for ever finding bitterness and disappointment. Unfortunately she sought this happiness in one channel always—through men, whom she fascinated by her beauty and by her wealth and power. It is doubtful if she ever loved any of her four husbands, or if her love survived her quick disillusionments. The one man on whom she lavished her maternal, jealous devotion, on whom she counted, her adopted son, Charles of Durazzo, deceived her, tortured her, and ultimately killed her. The murder of her first husband, Andrew of Hungary, whom she hated, let loose many scandals and brought his brother, the King of

Hungary, to avenge him. Jeanne, who had quickly remarried Louis of Taranta, sought refuge in a flight to Avignon, where she bribed the Pope, Clement VI., to annul her first marriage and declare her innocent of the murder of her first husband. She paid the Pope 80,000 florins and all the fair lands around Avignon for this. So she regained her throne and was widowed in the same year, 1362. Again she married at once, John, King of Majorca. This marriage was also unhappy, and her husband, mindful of the fate of others, fled to Spain, where he died in 1375. For the fourth time the queen married—for there was always a suitor or a lover waiting. This time she chose a Teuton, Otto of Brunswick. A disastrous arrangement. The Pope was hurt and Naples furious. The old scandal of the first marriage and the murder broke out afresh. Having no child, Jeanne had adopted Louis of Durazzo and had brought him up and educated him. The people of Naples proclaimed Durazzo King, and Clement, from his tall golden palace in Avignon, advised the wretched Queen to adopt in place of the ungrateful Durazzo, Louis Duke of Anjou. The surrender of Jeanne to the besieger of her kingdom, her once beloved Durazzo, is of vast dramatic movement and emotion. She surrendered just as the Provencal fleet, sailing to her help, was sighted in Naples bay. Durazzo received her well, keeping an eye on the knights and captains of Provence, but Jeanne, dramatically, before her captor and her knights, proclaimed Anjou as her successor:—"And now, gentle knights, I know what Fate reserves for me. Tell Anjou to avenge me on the brigand who holds me captive."

Poor lady : she again, and for the last time, counted on affection, and gratitude, or duty—she counted on the last man on whom she had bestowed her love—Anjou.

But Anjou was having a gorgeous time in Provence, looting, raiding and subjecting. This pillage took two years. Two years—while Jeanne in the grim Tower of Murano, dreaded each day, yet prayed to be spared another. One night her anguish came to an end, and this hopeless woman was smothered under a heavy mattress. So ends this life of scheming, and hoping, and escaping, dread and difficulty, passion and pain.

And now that the vermouth of Les Adrets is finished, let us take the Aurelian way, returning to Cannes and leave these Estérels in a golden sunset.

August, 1923.

Almost as I write and face the sunset a greater and more dreadful blaze is over all. The Estérels is on fire ! And I am reminded of Smollett in the year 1760 who drove out to see the terrible devastation wrought on the Estérels by the great fire which had burned for several days. He writes in his forceful stomachful English, in a fury and rage, that it is something like a great crime to know how few or no precautions are taken to prevent so dreadful a disaster. And, possibly, only our children will see again the cork trees, the chestnuts, the asphodels and bracken, and the sweet cyst which we have known—the gorgeous luxuriant forest of the Estérels. Where there was luxury, will be sparseness : a burned and charred skeleton of this decorated temple.

Perhaps we shall discover some of its mysteries bared ; for me, I shall not look. There were seven hells let loose in the sky about the Estérels this night ; enough flame and enough fire to burn for ever the goddess, the unknown, evil, enticing Fée of the Estérels. We looked upon tier and tier of multi-coloured smoke, and long, licking lines of descending fire ; the roar of an unchained element, roaring as the heaving, slopping, slow waters of the Mediterranean roared, the night Messina sank, and crumbled. Little, isolated, burning houses like *pommes de pin* alight, hardly counted ; little pathetic properties burned—*tant pis*. Here was an element unchained, avenging, riotous, unquenchable, unfightable, dependant only on the will of another element, the wind. And in its good time, the wind dropped.

Here is Nature again at her jokes, stepping in when we most forget her, reminding us with one of her backward pulls, “ You are mine, of me, and in me. If you would escape, leave me as a hostage your body, and see if your imagination will make you a ladder to the skies ! ”

THE VIRGINS OF OLD CANNES

XV

THE VIRGINS OF OLD CANNES

“ Nous allasmes, coucher à Cannes qui est un village sur le bord de la mer, moitié haut, moitié bas ; en ce pays ici, la cherté de vivres n'est pas encore introduilte, car un homme pui va par pays à la disnée pour luy et son cheval que vingt sol, et à la couchée que trente. Nous fumes fort bien ici au Grand Logis.”—Taken from a collection of old papers.

AND to you in your hotel of modern days, here are some words for your consoling. On the days in January when the sun disappears behind the cold “mistral” which is blowing across from the Estérel, and may blow, God help you, for two more cold unCannes-like days, shut up in your bedroom in the Grand or Carlton Hotel, with your ears tired of jazz, and the hour of cocktails not yet ; look towards the Suquet Tower of old Cannes and remember there were once, not long ago, tall wonderful palm trees and sweet magnolias in the garden of the Grey d'Albion Hotel. Presently you will have cocktails, which is a good thing, for, unless you sit in the sun and see the Casino radiantly

white, a sepulchre for your imagination and your nerves, your eyes may sicken as you gaze over the new Cannes we have made for your pleasure ; but do not spit when you by accident pass the statue of one of those Englishmen who made Cannes, who found it a quiet palm-bordered little olive growing sea-port, and gave it to us for our delight. To-morrow the mistral may have blown itself out, the sun may shine, your liver may subside, and you will not look up in despair at the Suquet Tower.

And now at last that I come to write upon Cannes, I find as it sometimes happens in novels, that by describing and speaking much of the surroundings of a character, one has really suggested and even drawn a full length and detailed portrait of a hero or heroine, without having purported to do so. I seem to have asked you to know many Cannes. The limitations of the town, its growth, its names and vicissitudes seem to have taken definite shape, for by the outward agitations and effects towards others is a man judged : so with the civic and psychic life of a town. Well did they make an altar to Isis on the sea-shore, many centuries ago, carved with her wise adage, " What we are, were, and shall be——" with only this difference : a man grows familiar and adaptable to danger : the latest invaders are no longer the scourge of God, quite to the contrary, you are a very great blessing to Cannes. So it is of past Cannes that this chapter will speak : of the Suquet and its people, the steep Suquet, the bazaar of the *Castrum Francum*, the market place of *Canois*, hanging on to the steep sides of the castle cliff in tiers of tall

narrow houses and narrow paved streets. This part of the town was Cannes until the seventeenth century.

The cliffs were bare and sheer on the left where the route to Fréjus swirls round the base of the Suquet, and the first big villas were built in the early nineteenth century—the Pavilion, Parc, and Beausite Hotels. The Brougham Gardens on the Boulevard du Midi were the playground of the Suquet children. Here they played their little gambling games, lazy games of chance and hazard, the “mourre” played with the fingers and still seen all along the coast; they gambled, these children, with nuts and almonds, and they made the language of modern French Cannes—“j’ai tombé ma canne”—“Je me suis mangé un poulet”—“il a d’argent”—“on m’a marché dessus.”

Up the steep road over the Port Roman leading up to the Suquet, the country people drove their mules to market, their produce loaded into great, reed, thimble-shaped baskets called “gourbin,” borne on the backs of the mules. They passed through the Suquet town down the Rue des Suisse to the market place, where on Fête days they danced the Farandole or the “Roton,” a mauresque dance. On the Fête days of St. Donnat there were races on the Suquet, donkey races, and good prizes of sausages, chickens, and straw hats. The sailors and fishermen in their Catalan bonnets came up from the foreshore and the harbour, which reached from the little chapel now existing as “remains” in a warehouse yard on the new Port. The sea very nearly touched the Rue Antibes, where the flower market now stands, and the quarter around the church

of Nôtre Dame de Voyage was part of the foreshore ; here a stream ran into the sea. There is the usual pretty legend of the building of this church ; apart from the legend a second church was probably a necessity to meet the demands of the growing town which was spreading to the east and north-east. The narrow, slippery, almost inaccessible path, which led from the sea level up to the Suquet chapel of St. Anne and to Nôtre Dame de Bonne Esperance (built in 1639). It was the only road up the hill unless you would do the tour of the town. Monsieur Chevalier, préfet of the Var in 1822, owing to the wishes of the inhabitants of Cannes, caused to be made the steep swinging road which has the name of Street Mont Chavalier. The legend of the building of the church on the sea level is, as usual, an apparition of the Virgin, appearing to a maiden *sans peur et sans reproche*, whose life was spent among the sheep who roamed about the low-lying, swampy fields amid the olives bordering what is now the Croisette. The most interesting among the Cannes chapels, now mostly transformed or destroyed, is the small chapel of St. Nicholas, not far from the station. Here, tradition has it that in a pagan temple the first Christian altar was erected, and consecrated by a disciple of Christ. As all Provence has always been quite certain of the landing on her shores of the Mother of Christ, *all* the other Marys and some of the disciples, this legend is as likely as any other. St. Nicholas was the first patron saint of Cannes and the manner of his coming is this. At some unknown period the Saracens took away the famous relics of St. Nicholas. The early Greek church raised a

crusade, and appealed to the peoples on the Mediterranean coast for support. Venice furnished the galleys and Cannes supplied a certain number of sailors for the enterprise. As an award, these Cannois asked for a portion of the relics and laid them in their oldest and most venerated sanctuary. The position of this, their oldest altar, makes one wonder if the Pagan position of Cannes did not have a great tendency to break away to the right, spreading to the east of the Canal, up towards the Pezou, where Roman tiles have been found in quantity. As I am sure the Aurelian way kept to the hills, level with Vallauris, this is all more in rhythm. Very little of Rome has ever been found in the old town of Cannes. There is the famous stone that Caius Venusius Andron, the administrator of the Augustals, placed to the memory of his daughter Venusia Antimillia—"dulcissimæ" maiden.

The "Sevirs" of the Augustals is intriguing, until one remembers that the Emperor Augustus organized a sort of civil service called "magistri vicorum" who presided over the cult of public Lares. To this was added the cult of Augustinian genii or luck? for how shall I translate that verse of Ovid—

*Mille Lares Geniumque clucis qui tradidit illos
Urbs habet, et vici numina trina colunt.*

These priest magistrates were six in number. The funeral stone of Antimillia was found in Cannes, but near the chapel of St. Nicholas! The oldest buildings in the Suquet can boast of nothing Roman, though they

may even be far older. The oldest building hardly exists—it was the original Hospice of Cannes, and was inaugurated after the death of Consortia whom Hecca loved and who had her hospital at Mandelieu. The château fort, which is destroyed, mainly because it was never inhabited, was of no particular interest. But the tower is one of the most beautiful on the Provencal coast. Begun in 1070 as a refuge for the inhabitants of Cannes in the days of the Saracen invasions it was finished in 1395 by the Abbé of Les Lérins. The tower was once decorated in machecolis as is still seen on the St. Honorât tower. Lightning struck this tower twice, and its owner began to sell it as building material, until authority stopped him. Its decapitated beauty still dominates the old town and the old Port. The church is not interesting, but here is the famous desecrated coffer which before the Revolution contained the body of St. Honorat. To the north-east of the tower is the chapel of St. Anne, once considered to be of the 12th or 13th century ; lately curious discoveries have been going on in this old chapel, converted at one time into a prison. Its history has yet to be written, but here in the curious stone sculptures of the walls may be found interest for those who have studied symbolism in its deepest meaning. In the crypt were found a few months ago, by workmen, the treasure and statues belonging to the Church before the Revolution. Great and pious care was taken of them by the Curé of those days. He signed and sealed each object encased in its leaden, bell-like outer covering: his writing is very clear and precise. The leaden cases have protected throughout the genera-

tions, and the treasure intact is once more installed in the Church.

To-day and yesterday and to-morrow are consecrated to the Fête des Pêcheurs, and here again I stumble on one of the paradoxes of Cannes.

There are still quantities of fishermen but there are no fish. At least—few fish and very expensive. The great anchovy industry seems to have almost entirely disappeared: the fishermen will say the anchovy has disappeared: there is a distinction between the anchovy and the industry. They give several reasons for this scarcity of fish. It must indeed be only of late years, for nearly all the old maps of Cannes and its coastal neighbourhood are maps giving old fishing rights, limits and boundaries. The land topography is incidental, artistic and decorative. Also in the middle ages the fishermen of Cannes, holding their importance from inheritance of Ligurian ancestry, were of such import and standing as to have what amounted to a freemasonry and a small Court of their own for settlement of disputes. King René created this institution. It was called “Prudhommes pêcheurs.” They wore “une robe noire et la Toque les jours de fête.” They are responsible for the continuance of many old customs—that of midnight marriages—the midnight courting songs, the “charivaris” made at the home of a widower who remarried, and most interesting of all, an old Egyptian custom, “les discours funéraire.” The discourse over the dead, usually a moral criticism. Long after Rome was dead, the Cannois and their neighbours at Vallauris perpetu-

ated this custom, which is found alike in the north and the south.

During the appalling days of the reign of Jeanne of Naples, when to live through a day was a matter of hazard and luck, the Cannes fishermen quietly continued to fish for coral, and to spear fish with their two pronged fork on calm nights, near the shore, by the light of the flambeau carried in the prow.

And now they tell me that violent methods bred of violence—dynamiting the water so the dead or stunned fish floated to the top—have deprived Cannes of one of her most ancient rights, and one of her most ancient and most indisputable glories.

WRITTEN IN THE RECORDS OF CANNES

It was told to me, one hot day of July over iced drinks in a Cannes café ; told by a “ Félibre distingué,” a friend of Mistral, the great Provençal poet, who was the son of a peasant and in whom the love of the land was as a poison in his blood, a stimulant, and a fragrant strong essence. He began with the languages of Southern France. He collected the dying Languedoc, the dead Languedoil, with the poetry, legends, history, romance and beauty they stood for. He shut them in his heart and in his brain ; he fed them on his blood ; on his life blood, and there bloomed something very lovely from this. They gave him the Nobel prize in the north, they translated “ Mireille,” his poem story, into Japanese in the east, they acclaimed him as a prophet in the south ; the west

will know him because of their hot-house erudition. But Frédéric Mistral made a heap of these honours and glories, together with the Nobel prize-money, and he gave them all to the Society he founded in his Provençal country—the “Félibre.” This Society, which is one of literature and mysticism, historical and civic ethics, has its home in the south and appeals to the south, it has not yet bred the genius that Sinn Fein conceived—I doubt if it ever will—its people are too happy, too comfortable, too wise. The Greco-latin brain has little room for sentiment which is merely a “floraison,” or a blooming of the stem matter. The Provençal “galéja,” the joke, is too near the surface, the joke against you or oneself! a laugh and a wink and a devastating clarity of vision, only disproportioned by oneself! The Provençal looms very big when he is seen by himself. Un beau sentiment—oh, yes, that always has its place; but a sentimentality without basic structural legs and a fair round belly—No. They are jealous these people; yes, because they find themselves, “costaud,” fine, smart fellows, worthy, splendid. They love a woman and will fight for her; not because *she* is worth the bother, but because they desire her, and no one else shall dare! They are very sane, and though they may deceive the “estranger,” they never deceive themselves—with the one exception; they must always see themselves magnified, as persons too big, too important, too beautiful. At least they say so in millions of words; torrents of words; they excite themselves with words; they make themselves a cleared space, and there they strut with their

tails all out—theirselfs in excelsis—fine fellows ! nearly gods. And the story told by my friend the Félibre, is full of this clarity of vision, this lack of sentiment.

For the Heroes of this tale, one must go back to the Saracens, and to that moment in the civic life of Cannes when the living Christian spirit of the Lérins island spread its domination over the Litoral ; almost one might say the civic life of the Litoral towns began *with* the Lérins and their monastic sway. The Saracens had the custom of swiftly descending, swooping down, on Fête days, into Cannes, or any of the coast towns, and carrying off the most beautiful maidens (incidentally the most beautiful young men).

On one famous occasion, sixty of the loveliest girls were seized under the very noses of the people of Cannes, and placed on board the Saracen ships. Adieu, Cannes !

The local Curé carefully recorded this awful happening in his parish record, next day ; he was a very young Curé, and, no doubt, tremendously impressed : possibly, the shrieks of those Cannes beauties haunted him, interrupted his peace by day and by night, and every hour he prayed for their souls, for those sixty virginal Cannoise souls ; and he exhorted his flock to do likewise. He prayed for their deliverance and for their souls. For sixty years those sixty virgins were prayed for by the Curé of Cannes. His prayers must have made a sort of milky way up through the starry spaces to the heavens, and God, for some unaccountable reason of infinite patience, did not put down the lid. The prayers of this righteous soul were to be answered.

One beautiful day in early Spring, the Saracen ship arrived,—with the sixty raped Virgins on board. To be returned ! A kind of “ conscience ” cargo.

The people of Cannes were aghast.

The maidens were now each eighty years old ; and the Cannois defended their town against such a catastrophe. They up, and forced the Saracens to retain the sixty raped virgins. Adieu, Cannes ! once more.

The same Curé grown sixty years older, with the same care, noted this fact in the record book of the town—the handwriting has hardly changed.

I thanked my Félibre friend for this funny and charming story of old Cannes, and I realized more completely the pagan inheritance of this land. With the mystic sentimentalism of the north (in spite of Strabo, the Greek geographer, who says the Irish insisted on eating their grandfathers) we Anglo-Saxons would have received the sixty old ladies with music and mayoral addresses—all the local charities would have clothed them and housed them, and they would have been safely shut up in damp alms-houses for life, to dream of, or to forget, their dissolute Saracen days.

A LEGEND OF MANDELIEU

XVI

A LEGEND OF MANDELIEU

TO the north west of the flat meadow-fields of Arluc, the buried Roman town which lay at the foot of the mound of St. Cassien, where the Siagne river floods and deltas into innumerable streams and marshes, across the bridge which was once the Ford of the river, as late as 1670, is Mandelieu.

The Knights of Malta called it Maudauslocus which means "the Ground of Command." For it was here that the members of the various branch Houses or Monasteries of this order were wont to come for the ceremony of initiation. If you will believe that the perched, walled, arcaded, gated, town of Aribreau in the Pegomas valley, is all that remains of the important Roman post town of Horrhea, the half-way resting house between Nice and Fréjus, then you can realize the importance of Maudauslocus, lying on the Aurelian way before the road sought the coast, after keeping along the higher hills through Vallauris, Mougins, La Roquette and Aribreau.

Mandelieu is now a small, scattered collection of houses in a mimosa forest.

And yet it has a sad and interesting legend, dating

from the days of early Christendom. There lived a proud, gentle and lovely lady, Consortia, a daughter of the Archbishop of Lyons, St. Eucher. Pale, gothic, tight-folded they carved her in stone as a Queen on Chartres cathedral, with her hanging, long, plaited hair framing her slight breasts down to her slim virginal feet. Her brothers gave her the lands of Mandelieu, and here she built and endowed and supervised a great hospice in connection with all the Monasteries and Holy Houses of the country-side.

To her hostel, one day, after a battle with the barbarians, came Hecca, a young and valorous prince.

Consortia herself entertained him, and her slim beauty went straight to the heart of Hecca : he desired her for wife.

But being in feudal rights to a chief who permitted no marriage without sanction, Hecca journeyed away to procure the necessary permission, which was given.

With a singing heart and in his best armour, he reached Mandelieu. On the threshold of the hospital he found his lady and declared his love. "Poor friend," she replied from her tight-folded gothic Christianity, like tortured virtue, "this can never be, for I and my friends have vowed our virginity to our Saviour and to his work in his hospital."

All poor, hot-blooded, Provencal Hecca's tears and prayers could not move her.

Sadly, he returned his steps to his manor, but fording the Siagne, his horse stumbled, and with Consortia's name on his lips he was drowned.

Here then is a gothic vignette ; like a bit of early

painted glass ; glowing, flamboyant in crude pure colour is Hecca and his southern impetuosity, set for ever between the thin, flat, clean-cut pointed window stone—that clear coldness of marble porphyry, ice glaze over strong rock—like the white clear will of Consortia who was not of the south.

Between Mandelieu and the Napoule on the coast, is Les Thermes on the Route Nationale. This was the *Thermae* of the Romans on the Aurelian way, before the road left the coast and mounted into the wildness of the Estérel.

Here were famous hot-springs used by the Romans of Arluc.

Below the hill of St. Peyre, in the plains along the river and the mountain edges, by the earnest searchers—the “ Ramblers of Cannes ” surely know it well—should be found the ruins of Avignonette or Avenionetum.

To the church of Nôtre Dame de Bosco or Nôtre Dame d'Avignonette-de-la-Vignette-du-Vigneron, the inhabitants of Mougins, before the Revolution, made once a year a pilgrimage. In 1390 the Seigneur, who had had his castle laid in ruins, built a new château at La Napoule, and the Napoule inhabitants walked across the plain on Sundays to the Avignonette old chapel on the edges of the Estérel Hills : La Minette, that is the name of this small stretch of country. The golf-links are at its door, and the Route Nationale to Fréjus bounds it on the right. Otherwise, traces of its existence are found in farm buildings and out-houses.

La Napoule, up to the eleventh century, was Epulia, gathering during years the Provençal euphonic at the commencement of the word. Until the château was built and taken in 1397, when Marie de Blois presented the seigneurie de la Napoule to Guillaume de Villeneuve, there is little mention of La Napoule. In Greek and Roman days it had existed ; Moun San Peye was once Mont de Mercure, and another peak in the neighbourhood was dedicated to Mars : south west of La Napoule a well existed, and was called by the inhabitants “ Citerne Romaine.” A girl of Marseilles was buried here and her stone was found dedicated to that strange local god, who seems to have arrived with the Greeks, and was kept and acclimatized by the folk of the Litoral as Mars-Olloubius. Some authors, passing over the turns and flourishes of the Aurelian way, trying to prove that the Romans went straight and never round, rule out Auribeau and the ancient Horrhea on the Aurelian way between Fréjus and Antibes, and give its name and position to La Napoule.

Either way is the solution ; for to avoid Cannes and the land along the sea and so up to Vallauris, it was more natural to leave the sea-post St. Cassien to keep high up in the hills and cut across through Monans and Mougins, past Vallauris to Antibes and Nice.

But it is of La Napoule in the middle ages that we are more certain. Early Protestantism found a strong hold here. I am not sure that André de Saliess, the famous Calvinist schoolmaster of La Napoule, was not part of that convinced, noble sect who founded near and about Nîmes a French branch of Quakers. So great was his influence

that the village was excommunicated for the good reason that there was no protest. Yet, oh ! verily of the south this Napoule, true to its inheritance, for in a few years, when Avignon sent special missionaries to re-garner its lost flock, there was no mention of the Calvinistic tendencies of the village.

La Napoule seems to have been almost a neat little bone of contention or a Naboth's vineyard to the Cannois people. Its domains were illustrated throughout the middle ages in old maps, by fishing rights, corn rights, dues and taxes ; no one ever being quite sure who was the rightful collector. Dreadful fights and squabbles used La Napoule as a *champs de bataille* : not even the omnipotent Lérins seemed capable of enforcing these undefined rights, born of gifts from Princes, gifts to retainers and monasteries. The beneficiaries from neighbouring towns and villages suddenly descending, enormous weights of measure in hand, to collect their alleged right in wheat, or fish, or corn, were sure to be met with opposition.

And here we come to one of those milestones where the inscription is tinged with so personal a touch as to make humour live in the soul we are kindling out of this rural, agricultural death. There was an old Dame of La Napoule, Madame la Baronne de Tourelle, who snapped her fingers at all this army of weights and measures which came out from Cannes in the days of the Napoule harvest. She owned the château and she wanted her corn and she said so. With Tran-Tran, her faithful servant, and her agent, armed to the teeth, she climbed the tower and put up

such a fight that the Measures from Cannes dropped their interfering little mediæval weights and ran home terrified, especially as nearly all the inhabitants, armed, partook in the defence. The Cannes bailiff returned later, accompanied by his weights and measures "reiterating his request"; but Madame's agent, La Grave, "blaspheming the name of God," replied that any one touching a single blade of corn would be cut to pieces. Not convinced, the first consul, Jean Dumas, then tried on the sly, to weigh out a "panal" of corn. La Grave seeing this, pistol in hand, again calling upon God and all the good people of La Napoule, drove Dumas and his "panal" back to Cannes, with shouts, yells and much more noise. Whether it was by stealth, by night, by confusion, who will know, but Cannes succeeded in getting that corn in spite of La Baronne and the High Courts who gave decision in her favour.

These old rights of corn are like the rights of way of the country-side, disputable and indisputable, never written, deriving their inviolability from the persistence and the custom of ages. Does a path run past your dining-room window? Though there be twenty alternative paths, if custom and habit have used the one which runs past the dining-room windows, useless to fume or protest, or suggest another to the hordes of neighbours who will troop past at hours convenient or otherwise. There is no sense of privately-held property; there are few or no fences or walls of good stone, few peasants even know the limits of boundaries of their lands inherited *en morceaux*, dotted all over the country, here and there; inherited from parents and ancestors

dating from the Revolution. Lately, since the war, there has been a feeling that it were better to keep the land more intact, from economical motives. Therefore the peasant-holder with one child thinks that he has enough, and condoles with him who may have two or three children. The splitting up of land in France has become a serious factor, not yet an active one, but I foresee a revolutionary movement to consolidate land, otherwise farming in this scattered *par ci* and *par la* fashion will become economically and physically an impossibility.

This is a diversion from the Lady of La Napoule and her Tran-Tran, but all in the picture, should you make a just one, of this jig-saw patterned land. To see the country side and the classic view of the sea-front you must climb out of Napoule. The zig-zag path through cork tree glade and myrtle up the Hill of San Peyre, or Mont de Mars, is rewarded, as the guide books put it, by a view. Little green lizards run in and out of the pink and jade green stones of the ruined tower and chapel on the hill-top, and the corn lands stretch below, in orange and yellow squares.

One day the peasant-owner of the château of La Napoule will blow up, with appropriate scorn and intolerant fury, the vile and bourgeois dwelling sandwiched between the Tower of La Baronne and the old walls, where the nine guns, allotted to the holder of the château, were lodged. The stone which composes the tower and walls and even the house is like a chapter in the Revelations; of porphyry and jasper, lapis and jade, sardonyx and onyx, and matrix turquoise and

amethyst. It is composed of bits of precious stones, mosaic-built and strong. Here is a part of the Estérel themselves, the very essence in material, in stones, all glowing, alive, vivid. Wonderful stones, shaded by those rare tall trees of the south, the eucalyptus trees, carrying to the heavens the sweet-scents of the earth. For the land towards the evening is the Garden of Spices, and the breath of the little wind from the hills which heralds the night, the moon and the nightingale, stirs the thyme, the wild mints, the aspic and sage, stirs the leaves of the laurel and the myrtle and the rapturous scent of the wild lemon and geranium The spices blow from wild gardens on parched hill-sides, float over the gracious garden flowers in the kept spaces inside the château walls and through the long fringe-like leaves of the eucalyptus trees. Below the château, below the rocks, red sails of fishing boats catch the sunset rays, the salt breeze merges with the strong land scents, and when darkness falls a flare of light from the sea tells of night fishing, fishing with spears as the people fished very long ago when Solomon made his songs.

And this La Napoule has inspired great men in solitude, Flaubert, Wilde after prison, de Maupassant. It was the present owner of the château, while dining in his balcony overhanging the sea, who told me this, and how de Maupassant took the pointed hill of San Peyre as a background for one of his best stories and brought this nice little pagan hill up to date.

We were speaking of Roman days, the turbulent Middle Ages, he with intolerance, in an "Ulyssian"

mood, in praise of the moderns—ourselves, the personal touch : Marina rather antagonistic but agreeing, finding no greater difference and surely little preference in any age, having the Cockney soul of a Rambler who rambles mentally through all ages, and in discovering old land-marks, adds better direction and understanding to to-day. For the Romance and Reason of Adventure and History are independent and fully sequent one after another—they need environment, natural or romantic pedestals and backgrounds : old histories give the key to modern adventure ; and though I may see Théoule dominated by a soap-factory, I must see the Tower of San Peyre as a temple to Mars. Atmosphere is like a siren schoolmistress who makes curious sums and problems out of us and our atavism, for we are as dependent on the past as Henry Clewes is on his rocking chair, Max Nordeau on his red flannel, Mr. Grant Richards on his monocle and D. H. Lawrence on his Kitchenino ; and thereby we project ourselves into the future, for these men or their manners seem to be determined to outlive the present. And who shall say where history ends and adventure begins ? And I am an adventuress in history and there are memorials even in Beckenham.

NAPOLEON CAMPS IN CANNES

XVII

NAPOLEON CAMPS IN CANNES

THE communing of great men must perforce be done when the night falls and they may be alone ; or for perfect freedom of thought and solitude they must seek a high place well apart from the world, like St. Honorat in the glory and solitude of the Estérel peaks ; or Socrates, who let the day lap over into the night, while unravelling the skein of his own visions. There is a very beautiful passage in Plato, well worth remembering and of import here, to prove the rare power of detachment great men are able to possess, the loneliness of their souls, and their power of resistance or unconsciousness of the flesh and its interferences.

Here is the description of Socrates in thought. “ In one instance he was seen early in the morning, standing in one place, wrapped in meditation, and as he seemed not to be able to unravel the subject of his thoughts he still continued to stand as inquiring and discussing within himself : and when noon came, the soldiers observed him and said one to the other, ‘ Socrate has been standing there thinking ever since the morning.’ At last some Ionians came to the spot and supped, and, as it was summer, having their blankets with them, they lay down to sleep in the cool : they observed that

Socrates continued to stand the whole night until morning, and that when the sun rose, he saluted it with a prayer and departed."

And now for a later and more tragic vigil. Before the days of the present church of Nôtre Dame de Bon Voyage in Cannes, was an open square of ground surrounded by trees and outside the limits of the town.

On the night of the 1st of March, 1815, about eleven o'clock, the children of Cannes, mad with excitement, rushed to their playground and found a bivouac fire, horses munching quietly, the troops asleep in a circle, decorated, beplumed generals asleep, and one solitary, small, dark man standing alone, looking into the starlit darkness.

For a moment the Cannois children hesitated, and then, hands linked, they encircled the half-conscious Emperor, shrieking and yelling "Vive l'Empereur."

The Generals Drouot, Bertrand and Cambronne leapt to their feet, Drouot with his sword drawn.

"Leave the little ones," said Napoleon, "little children are never enemies."

Perhaps this interruption in the midst of his solitude and concentration came almost as an assuagement to his fears. Did he still hold the enthusiasm of his people? Was his name still magnetic? Did France really hold for him all that the long vigil at Elba had promised? Was this adventure a real sequence in the magical career he had followed with an inevitable certainty? Had Elba broken the spell? A few moments of doubt, and then out of the darkness those children's voices, "Vive l'Empereur."

He who believes in Fate and his own star must also watch for the signs and wonders of the land. Sleepy fools these men he had made Generals, they could not see the import of these cries : let them keep their swords and their fears for proper occasions. But how annoying the night should be disturbed. All day there had been tumult—the landing at Golfe Jouan, near Antibes, the march and bivouac at Cannes ; and in a few moments he was to give an interview to a Prince—an important interview—Monaco must come with him to Paris—and he wished the Generals asleep again and the children with their rowdy noise in hell. Ah ! here was his gentleman—in white gloves so please you—as for an audience with an Emperor ! Good ! The stars were in their right courses, and there were yet some few silent hours before the dawn.

But the interview with the Prince of Monaco went the wrong way, the argument went agley, and the few who listened heard the short, quick, terse tones of the Emperor, “ Very well, sir, you had better continue your journey to your own country—I go to mine.”

And then came peace again, and the vigil of one man while all others slept. Only the nightingales in the plane trees broke the silence. So passed five hours. At four o'clock the camp was astir and the march to Grasse began.

There lived in temporary seclusion, near Mougins, in a great Provence maas or manor house, one of Napoleons best generals, Gazan. The Gazans had also a town house in Grasse, as had all the landed gentlefolk or “ petite noblesse ” of the country side. Therefore

Gazan had no doubt inside information as to the imperial temper and imperial loyalty of Grasse. Gazan knew Grasse had best be avoided on this adventurous march to Paris.

And as the morning sun's rays drifted over the grassy meadows of St. Bazile, below Mougins, Gazan on his old charger rode out to meet his Emperor on his white horse. And together they rode at the head of the little army, Gazan indicating the short cuts, whereby they avoided the high road to Grasse; marching between the hills round Castellarus up past Près du Lac to a great field in the mountain above Grasse, called Roquavignon, on the route de Gap. And under a solitary cypress tree, that night Napoleon Buonaparte watched, for the last time in his life, the moonlight path of the Mediterranean waters which led from Elba.

THE ORANGE FLOWER
RECOLTE

XVIII

THE ORANGE FLOWER RECOLTE

LATE anemone blossoms linger like stray petals from a dream of flowers. The sun, not yet appeared, is slowly mounting to sudden fury from behind the hill village, whose counts were brigands and whose mayors become députés.

Insensible to politics or passion, Gillian's bright yellow head is just visible among the deep grasses in the olive grove. The early light is a magic business when it deals with olives and patches of poppies lying amid the green corn, like molten enamel.

Below the steep terrace where the vegetables grow, the sweet peas scent the atmosphere that belongs to my little red-roofed study. Early fig-trees shadow the Madonna lilies not yet in bloom. The meadows below are watered by the gentle canal meandering through the pine-woods where the wild lavender will ripen in the hot days of August. The Grasse mountains are still blue, only the highest tips of the Italian Alps have already seen the sun. We are early, but the bees are before us. A vibrant mass of sound encircles and enfolds the orange trees. The entire terrace is obsessed with sound. Our voices seem lost in disharmony. In vain may the high

cabbages, struggling into rich yellow crowns, entice the bees : in vain the riper apple blossom or the loquate fruit attract. Here among the orange trees is the bees' heaven ; here their Elysian fields.

The ladders placed, the great sheets stretched below to catch the falling blossoms—our work begins.

Each separate tree has character. Some bear great wax-like blooms, opaque and sparse ; others, frail, transparent flowers whose sun-tired petals fall at the lightest touch. These bear more copiously, but weigh lighter in the balance. These, too, the bees prefer. Some trees are cross and callous and bear thorns—not all their fault, for we pruned them too leisurely in the autumn, and dry hard wood is found among their leaves, as our scarred hands bear witness. The blossoms fall into the sheets below, a continuous fragrant white shower. Soon the sun makes work a burning affair, and Gillian and the dog leap on and off the sheet, with the intention of collecting the scent-drugged beetles that fall with the blossoms, and that lie paralysed amid the flowers in glowing metallic bits of colour, blue and green like the Egyptian scarab beetle. The heat and these further interruptions retard us, and we stop for *café au lait* and to collect and place in large flat baskets our kilos of blossom. We dip the baskets in water and place them in the cool old stone cellars. After nine o'clock a breeze floods over the olive trees, straight up from the plains of the sea which lie below us to the south ; the Mediterranean blue, seen in azure pools and patches through the pines and olives.

All through the day the picking continues ; sometimes the trees are gently shaken, when the blossom has been



GATHERING ORANGE BLOSSOM.

caught and detained in flight by the leaves. This tree is abundant and yields twenty kilos—another only four kilos.

In the evening the baskets are carried to the receiving *depôt*, a little wide-doored stone hut. The road that leads us there is one continuous dream of perfume.

At the factory at Grasse each blossom will be flung gently upon flat square slabs of grease and left until it dies, but the scent will be caught and held in that wax and stored, and months later when melted, the essential thing will be still there, the sweet strong essence which may then be distilled.

Like a soul left behind from a broken body, the *scent* of the flower which is forbidden to produce fruit is transmigrated and its essence caught and held in the wax. It sees a second resurrection when the wax is melted for the distillation of essential oil. Here is a whole nature parallel of creation and eternity. In the waxen tablets is preserved for more than a short time, the story of the orange flower: first the labouring of the ground, the watering, the manuring, the pruning, the thinning of the leaves; and lastly, the labour of the gathering. Here unseen in these wax tablets lie the commandments of Nature, working for perpetuity.

The unthinking, tired peasants, priests of this strange rite, carrying or carting fragrant bales or baskets of blossom, form a fresco picture along the Route du Moulin.

The blossom is weighed in huge brass measures and a receipt is given. This year the parfumeurs will pay very little. After the war the price was high—very

high—perhaps thirty francs a kilo—now it will be five francs.

Happy the family who may cull their own blossom and work their own terraces.

The earth is an expensive mistress, should any Virgil sing otherwise.

THE FLOWERS OF THE
RIVIERA

XIX

THE FLOWERS OF THE RIVIERA

THE innovation trunks form high barricades round the sunlit Cannes station during the month of April. The days of the mimosa are passed, the hedges are gay with wild-roses, red and pink, and the scent of honeysuckle is upon the land ; the nightingales have begun their ecstasy in the cypress trees, in the oak-woods of the old Cannes gardens, and among the hills. Yet there are lilacs in England, and it is time to go. So every one goes. Back to London's May snows, or to ghastly stuffy hours spent in the big dress-makers' houses in Paris. The heart of the slave knoweth its own secrets. True, there lingers that sort of aftermath of the Riviera season, which until the big exodus takes place, is not obvious in the narrow drafty Rue d'Antibes. These aftermath people resort to the smaller hotels and buy "espadrilles" (comfortable white linen heelless shoes laced à la grecque with white tapes), and they take hygienic physical exercise on the seashore. Closed are the links and the tennis courts, the Casino and the few restaurants, though the best of dinners may be had at the Taverne Royale. The world of the Cannois shuts up its shops, and like gaudy-coloured

beetles, issue in streams from their little dung heaps, where the spoil of the season is garnered into strong iron boxes or expended in Ville de Paris bonds. The Café des Alliés under the long avenues of plane trees, does its roaring summer trade; the Connuchette has fluttered en route for Deauville, and the Cannois drinks beer in company with the local "professionnelle," whose toilette is a travesty of the last season's modes. Cannes as a town ceases to exist after one has passed the borders of the route de Grasse. The old town, the harbour, and the long sand stretch of the Boulevard du Midi become the hub of the universe.

The aftermath English and the hygienic French take long walks and excursions and become very friendly. But even for them arrives the day of departure, and once more, this time in early June, when the roses are dusty and even the marigolds finished, the station is crowded with old-fashioned leather trunks and Japanese baskets. The last of the season's adventurers are departing. A few hivernant families in big motors, packed with less important guests and children in déshabille of bathing dress and sweaters, rush gently to and fro towards the more distant sands of La Bocca or of Mandelieu. Then indeed the joys of the summer are to those who are left.

The end of the roses and honeysuckle, sees in the woods on the hills, a whole set of curious small orchids. There is one especially found in the Estérel, smallish and gold-spangled, brown, and purple brown, and brown over pink, and puce, but always brown. Its paler shades match the deep rose-coloured cyst only found on

the Estérel road nearing Fréjus. This brown orchid three times bigger would thrill a Vincent Square public.

Then there is a bright purple orchid which grows where the late snows have retreated, leaving sweet-smelling mosses of late spring. These are small and very bright and smell of new mown hay, and ice water. I have noticed in those high pasture lands, and on the rocky slopes above, the small dark iris which grows round Maniacci at the edge of Etna snows. There is also a pale green orchid, minute, marked with embossed purple velvet patches; and an entirely pale yellow orchid which grows in oak woods amid a small even-patterned fern: a very sweet smelling flower, but less original than the others.

Round Thorenc and above Grasse the cowslip flourishes, and I have picked gentians near St. Martin Vésubie in sight of the snows, after a walk through meadows of Alpine flowers. In a radius of one hour's motor run one may live under palms on the seashore or drink "cinzano" under budding chestnuts and half-opened lilacs with gentians on the snow-slopes a few yards away.

Then comes the long summer drought and the myrtle flowers white throughout the woods. Geraniums and bougianvilias survive; plumbago and the sweet lemon-scented olive-flower gives place to the tuberose. Thence autumn, and heavy, heavy torrential rains, and wild daisies on the hills; later, early winter roses. A moment of waiting, and the world is golden, golden, golden. Mimosa everywhere, but especially in the hills very near Cannes. On the Croix de

Garde : but never too high up, for mimosa needs shelter from the cold mountain winds. Lines and lines of winter roses, pink and yellow, grow among iris in neglected farmed patches. The spring is heralded by hyacinths—blue mostly, and millioned-hued “Tears of Venus,” drooping anemones like those on Etna, but less tall. Small pink ranunculus, black-thorn and may. Suddenly, in great vividness, the crimson-scarlet glistening intensive red of the real anemones. In once cultivated ground the purple and pink anemones spring, and single daffodils and white hyacinth. Wild violets border every stream. No need for villa gardens : they revolt ; the world is a garden and God walks therein.

In the plains the jasmine fields are in bloom. Entire families, even last season’s perfectly good cook, decamps, becomes rustic in high-heeled white shoes. These families are “embauché” by the farmers and growers to pick the jasmine flower through the summer months. They sleep under shelter of farm or trees and the business is a picnic. One may witness it any summer’s morning between Mougins and Grasse, when the star-white flowers are being gathered into filthy aprons, and a cackling and a chattering echoes through the valley, such as any Provençal “récolte” will evoke. And who would not weep for the past neat law and order—the old ordered beauty of the pickers of long ago in their red homespun wide skirts, black shawls, and wide-brimmed, tiny-crowned hats. The “costume du Pays” that is no more ! The old needle-quilted cretonne and chintz skirts are found and collected from antique shops or old cupboards, collected and

divided and used in modern Provençal houses as bedspreads. The making of the quilted needleworked skirts was once the family rite of a hot summer. The chintz was stretched on a wooden frame, cotton-wool or some thick material laid between the traced pattern and the chintz; intricate patterns, daisies, and squares, and circles, and lines, all needled in tiny stitch by many members of the family sitting under the parental lime tree before the farmhouse, during the hot afternoons in August. The weight and warmth of one of these skirts is recognized by a happy possessor. In the Musée Fragonard in Grasse, they preserve same dresses, printed shawls, aprons, and the black hats of the old Grassois costume. There is a great obscenity in modern slip-on dresses, false pearls, bangles and high heels as a background for this ancient custom of the "récolte." Again, grubby old ladies in patched grey worsted are not romantic when seen amid the acres of pink May-roses that lie two feet deep in cellar waiting to be raked over, almost fermenting, until the lorries from Grasse arrive to carry them steaming and scented to the factories. But even more dreadful, the Cannoise country maiden in the latest cheap model of a summer's sale, mincing with heavy ankles in artificial silk stockings between the fragrant lines of tuberose in a hot August sunrise. Here is a pretentiousness which springs from the quick habit of adaptation and mimicry, for the lower, bourgeois education cannot account for it. But the pretentiousness is only clothes deep; the real creature can carry on a conversation, eat at your table, drink with

you, without either side feeling uncomfortable. The innate good manners of the Provençal are their most beautiful attribute. If I must be robbed, lied to, or tricked, let it be done by a Provençal of Roman-Greek, Ligurian descent! God and history have made the Provençal lazy, dreadfully, happily lazy, able to pass a summer basking in the sun, or a winter like a casserole, simmering gently in comfortable red wine beside the fire; but to punish him just a little God has made him at times to be just a little mad. He must dance, or sing very loudly, or drink too much, or chase the mysterious Golden Goat only seen and never caught (a sort of tantalizing Blue Bird of Unhappiness, this Provençal Chèvre d'or). The Golden Goat is seen in Arles, it is seen in Grasse, golden and lonely and very fleet, as a vision. It is a Provençal legend—but hundreds of years before the Provençal was in being, the people round Biot worshipped at the altar of the Golden Goat—perhaps Jupiter's goat. But now it is a fleeting golden vision in the mind and in the literature of the land, and no one who has once seen it is ever quite comfortably happy again. But let no sentimentalist imagine the old customs, old songs, old costumes, will ever be seriously revived in Southern France—and here I ponder; am I quite correct in this statement? At this moment two stout dark maidens are at my studio door, in wide hats and ribbons and high heels and little trinkets and white thread long gloves—the Sunday toilette of a Cannoise virgin. My studio is miles from a road, up a hill surrounded by olives, miles from town or village. The maidens

suddenly remind me of sentimental London; they have little trays attached by ribbons round their necks, and they are selling little flags and badges! This is the first flag day I have met on the Riviera, and surely the first that has ever pushed its way into the fortresses of stone terrace and olive on the hills round Cannes. There are "Mistral" meetings and arranged costumed fêtes from time to time, but the spontaneousness has gone from the life of the people—the spontaneous song and dance and the gay uniform of the country.

Here is a short Calendar of Riviera flowers.

January.—Early mimosa, winter roses grown for export.

February.—Wild blue hyacinths, violets, cassis (à récolte), white cultivated hyacinths, daffodils, garden anemones, garden stocks, wallflower, wild violets.

March.—Wild anemones—pale pink and bright scarlet, pansies, daisies, sweet-peas, iris.

April.—Roses, marigolds, wild orchids, wild gladioli, cyst, sweet-peas, pinks, nasturtiums, love-in-the-mist, geraniums, wisteria, heliotrope.

May.—Orange flowers (récolte), daisies, plumbago, honeysuckle, tilleuil flowers, roses, lilies, cannae, broom, gorse, privet, field flowers of all sorts, all English summer plants, wild flax, lavender, a small blue orchid. On the mountains, wild iris, cowslips, gentians, etc.

June.—The first droughts begin. Hydrangeas and geraniums; wild scabius.

July.—Jasmin (récolte).

July.—Jasmin (récolte), the wild myrtle flowers, oléanders.

August.—Wild lavender in the woods, tuberose (récolte), jasmin, sunflowers.

September.—Fuschias, nasturtiums, chrysanthemums, dahlias, zinnias, asters, bougainvillea.

October.—Field daisies.

November.—Early stocks.

December.—Winter roses, primulas.

In this slight list I have not differentiated between a Cannes garden and a country garden. In a Cannes garden, sheltered, I think anything will grow at any time.

PROVENÇAL DISHES AND
WHERE TO EAT THEM

XX

PROVENÇAL DISHES AND WHERE TO EAT THEM

DURING the summer the Casino is shut and most of the big hotels, the Reserve, the Cap d'Antibes and all the local tea places within easy drive of Cannes ; and yet the warm nights invite lingering along high mountain roads and in the cool woods. Having suffered from not knowing where to go to get a meal within an hour's run of Cannes or Nice, I have made a list of spots where food is good.

Are you returning from a spin to Thorenc or some of the higher mountain towns? Then see, on my little inaccurate but adequate map, made from memory, how, by following the road from Grasse to Nice, the Route Nationale over the mountains, you may arrive at a large board in the village of Villeneuve-Loubet, which points to a road marked "Nice"—and which turns to the left. This road leads to the village of La Colle, leads through and down one of the smaller but very lovely gorges of the "Loupe," foaming and green, some hundred feet below the red earth and rock precipices, and where the road meets the river on a level, is

the Chapel of St. Donnat and the remains of a mill. Leave the road and find a narrow wooden bridge spanning the river, and there amid oaks are small tables—and the trout leap at your approach from the big tanks near the river. Here may you eat trout and the best in the world. And also they will give you a rapturous Italian soup done with *pâte* and cheese and eggs, and stuffed savoury artichokes so young and tender that the whole fruit may be eaten, almost as cream. And here you may eat chicken stewed with olives and tiny onions and many other good things—under the moon—for I have never tried the Restaurant except in summer. The Restaurants of the Gorge du Loup are passable at all seasons. At Antibes near the old Port is also a small café where the food is good. The Restaurant on the Island of Ste. Marguerite is open winter and summer—the cooking of a special dinner is first class. This is *not* a cheap restaurant, but the food is well-done and well-served and the wine is good.

The Hotel at Le Trayas on the Corniche d'or between Cannes and St. Raphael is famous for its fish dinners. They cook "rouget" there "à merveille," in oil. These small reddish "rougets" are hard to catch and rare, like all Mediterranean fish; they are best when cooked after a recipe hailing from Ventimiglia on the frontier, and used in some Cannes households. The fish is stewed in oil and black olives with a *purée* of tomatoes added, and served together.

Italian *pâte* dishes naturally play a rôle in a cooking which is run by a nation whose cooks are half Italian, or, at least, Nicois, or from the border.

Ravioli, squared pâte pasties stuffed with seasoned mincemeat and vegetables, is a favourite dish. The Grassois eat a flat open tart baked with hashed fresh anchovies, garlic, onion, and black olives. This is called *Tourta* or *Pisalla*. The peasants cook it for Sundays or feasts. The paste is always made with oil and a little warm water. *La Bouillabaisse* is made in Cannes by a stout smiling dame whose husband is a fisherman-sailor. They own a rather grubby little café on the old Port, mainly frequented by sailors or by the chosen few who know what to eat and don't mind where it is found. La mère Margot must be warned some hours ahead, for lobster is not always procurable, and bouillabaisse without lobster is not possible, though quite superior restaurants fancy otherwise. There is a Cannes and a Grassois manner of cooking fish which is too excellent not to be passed on. In oil, naturally, stewed in company with capers, small carrots and a hint of anchovy.

But all this makes me feel I will compile a small lovely book of Riviera dishes ere these too die like other food habits and customs. Who would not know the joys of cabbage! those whose childhood has been poisoned by scenes of rebellion, wherein coldish, colder, cold, icy-cold, dry or water-soaked greenish cabbage played a great part. Yet cabbages grow in England, and, God save us, are still eaten. Should I be undermining one of the strengths of England (for this mortifying of the inside flesh must be a source of moral strength) if I give a pleasant way of *enjoying* cabbage? And I dedicate this part of this chapter to my dear

friend and fellow home-keeper, Mrs. Arthur Waugh, chateleine and gardener of "Underhill," and to all the cabbages in her garden.

Take a frying pan—that's a professional touch—mince a small quantity of onions, fry them in oil or butter, add minced meat, vegetables, rice or anything you like, stir in the yoke of one egg. Fry all together. Take a *cabbage*, don't despise it, but take out the heart and chop it small; boil it and fry in with your other mixture. Choose twelve good leaves and boil them in water (*really*), but not over long. Spread each leaf and fill it with some of that good-smelling frying mixture and wrap the leaves round, making neat little cabbage packages. Place these in a pan, a spot of butter on each, and put in oven until slightly browned. And the possibilities and joys of a homely cabbage are before you!

For the help of anyone taking that lovely drive up to St. Martin Vésubie, they may well stop at a dusty spot on the Glacier river, Var, at the meeting of the many roads from St. Martin, from Grasse, from Puget Thegniers, from Nice, etc. The dusty village is called Vésubie and is at the mouth of the Vésubie river; there, at the second inn called Cité A. . . . is an excellent cook and a good table d'hôte for a very small sum. Ask here for their uncooked ham, most excellent, but cut too thick.

Then there should be a dissertation on the homely *Rabbit à la Provençal*. Civet is too well known to be here divulged; but what of the casserole rabbit in white wine? Oil, please, boiling, bubbling oil, and the

rabbit neatly cut up. Fry it lightly in company with onions, three small carrots and a bay leaf, then place all this good fry in a pot or casserole with more onions (small round ones), add a little water, and let it all stew. When nearly cooked add a wineglass of white wine.

Gnocchi is another dish of Provençal fame and its measures and methods are these :—

A purée of potatoes ; a pâte made of flour and warm water ; introduce the potatoes and a very little oil. Some cooks add the whipped white of egg ; roll and cut in tricornes and boil ; powder with grated cheese.

And *Tomatoes*—Here is their epitomy—here is the tomato à la Provençal :—a savoury business, calling for—not too ripe tomatoes divided into half, the pulpiest portions containing pips deftly extracted and mixed with a curious fine hash of boiled spinach, breadcrumbs, an egg, onions (very fine) and a speck of garlic—if your inside appreciates this delicious flavour. This mixture is placed in a frying pan with oil, and when well sizzling is replaced in the tomatoes. Fine breadcrumbs are sprinkled on top, and the oven receives all.

When the garden teams with *artichokes* and *broad beans* and *peas*—cull all *young*, oh, but *very* young ; the 'chokes must not be bigger than an egg, the beans no bigger than a sixpenny piece. That's the secret ! Cut the sharp points off the tops of the artichokes, and take away the six longest leaves. Then place all together in a casserole with oil or butter, add a few small squares of bacon, and let it all cook until fit to eat. It is safer to cook, in water, the artichokes apart, for they must be soft enough to be eaten entirely—like a bean.

Stuffed artichokes too are delicious. Broad Beans peeled of their outer skin when fairly young, served with oil and vinegar make a good salad—if you like queer salads.

AMATEUR FARMING IN
PROVENCE

XXI

AMATEUR FARMING IN PROVENCE

FEW people whose outlook on the Côte d'Or is from the point of advantage of a "Sleeper," running along the marvellous railway line from Marseilles to Cannes, would believe that on the pine-covered hills and in olive shaded valleys between Cannes and Grasse, amateur efforts at various kinds of farming are in progress.

This chapter is not a pæan of success. To succeed on the soil one must be either a peasant or a Russian refugee, for the peasant is his own labourer; he is his own proprietor since his father gave him the soil as a gift of the Revolution. The peasant inhabits a two roomed dilapidation of delicious Provençal tiles on roof and floor, furnished with a bedstead and a table, both luxuries for winter; during the summer the sky is his tent and the earth, soft, under the newly-dug olive roots, his bed. For food, a few raw tomatoes, a root of garlic and ripe figs or dried figs; and in winter, when there is less work to do late in the fields, the farmer's wife makes a wonderful luscious dish called "la soupe." No auditor would be patient while I enlarged upon the "soupe."— But, oh! long-suffering men of England, when you

next sit over that thin liquid called soup without the “e”—think well what the little “e” may mean—onions, young carrots, a potato, beans (dried), a few herbs, a little oil, a good deal of cheese and some fresh pâte—(a sort of ribbon-like macaroni). And now let's leave the soupe and on to the farming. But this menu of the humble and the rich landowners is the reason of the success of France as an agricultural country, though no Norman farmer would go without his meat and his salad he includes the soup in his economies. The main culture of this district are the olives, the vine and the récoltes of jasmine, tuberoses and orange flowers, sold to the perfumers of Grasse, that exquisite and ancient town stretching itself luxuriantly along the slopes of the high mountains.

This war has finished for some years or for ever the culture of flowers which has been since the first annals of Cannes : in the early fourteenth and fifteenth century we read of the culture of mulberry trees, “pinks of Provence, roses of the south.” Last year we gave our roses to the pigs, for their price was below profit, about twenty centimes the kilo.

Jasmine—which rose to 27 francs the kilo after the war, is now down to 7 francs ; small profit unless the family is sufficiently big to exclude outsiders whose services—from 5 a.m. to 6 p.m.—with many hours off, vary from ten francs upwards per day. The woman pickers are paid by the kilo.

Orange flower—a cheap culture once the trees have been manured. The factories pay four francs fifty centimes the kilo and the pickers take as much as 16

francs per day. The average récolte of a terrace of twenty orange trees is 160 kilo. Two pickers could manage this number of trees.

Tuberoses require little labour if planted thickly as the peasants do, to avoid the trouble of weeding. They fetched last year twelve to sixteen francs the kilo. This year seven francs !

Culture on any large scale can never be a success here, owing to wages, scarcity of water at times and the fluctuating perfume market.

The *olive* pays its way as all local cooking is done with oil.

One thing remains—

The *vine*. To any intelligent man who will take the trouble to go for a few months to the agricultural college at Montpellier, the vine may mean a living and probably more. Grapes grown in the bright red, alluvial soil, or on the rocky soil bordering pine woods, produce and have always produced a wine which takes its name from the chief village of the district and is celebrated all over France. As yet it has *not* been grown on an extensive scale.

The outlay is not much greater than for any other culture, and most farm houses are built over old, cool cellars quite suitable for wine pressing on a small scale. An interesting perspective in view of the constant labour of digging the earth in a vineyard, or, as they call it here, to *bécher*, is the lately avowed fact that this labour may be diminished to a third, by the use of a small motor tractor well able to work in the spaces between the vines.

This culture needs a chapter to itself, and I must pass over the details.

Ground in this district that has at no too recent date been "défoncé"—that is, very deeply dug and turned over with an agricultural instrument called "bécu"—is valued from 5 fcs. to 2.50 the square metre. With the exchange at 52 fcs. to the pound, this can easily be reckoned in present values. To défoncer a terrace, for nearly all land is laid out in slightly sloping series of stone-banked terraces, may cost on an average 16 francs per day and very few metres are done in one day. Labour, mostly Italian from Northern Italy or Savoy, is a huge and ever-increasing expense.

Manure is a difficulty. Horses are very scarce. Cows almost unknown. The peasant, therefore, uses the sweepings of his goats, his rabbits, hens and pigs.

Sewage, usually preserved on the terraces in half-sunk oil jars made of the yellow clay of Vallaurès, is the most precious fertilizer.

Chemical manures, though efficacious in some cases, are mostly too active in this soil so permeated by the fiercest sun in Europe.

I must not terminate without a word about chickens !

At St. Raphael, some thirty miles from here, a Frenchman is producing and selling eggs and chickens at a large profit. A well-known Englishman, who once took show prizes for agricultural animals, and had large farm-lands in England, has bought a farm near Cannes, and he and his wife between the glorious hours of dawn and sunrise manage to pursue this "culture" to their advantage, and the rest of the day is spent on the golf-

links or at the Casino. In this case there was no trouble about capital and outlay, and the market is of a private nature.

The Russian refugees in the long low valleys between Cannes and Ranguin are pursuing this livelihood with some success. Success depends on the water-supply and on the races of fowls used for breeding. Corn in small quantities can be grown for chicken food, never or seldom in large quantities because of the limited space of the terraces.

Maize, if irrigated, grows well and provides grain for the chickens; its long green leaves furnish much relished food for rabbits. This animal is precarious; the breed of the country is best, and stands the summer heat and drought.

Vegetables, growing with incredible rapidity, can be just made to pay, demanding manure and constant irrigation during summer months.

Taken with the purpose of living within a small income, in a superb climate near the most expensive town in France, with an average amount of work done by oneself and a capital of £500, a farm in the Côte d'Or may be a delightful and not disadvantageous proposition.

FINALE

“**M**ARINA,” says Wisdom, lying in Virgilian ease under the fig tree, “you are eating green almonds and you will die of a pain. Remember the story of ‘Sauf Malheur.’”

“Don’t remind me of either misfortune,” I reply, “to die of eating green almonds is a worthy death, and ‘Sauf Malheur’ I am keeping for another book; even Nature is bidding you hold your peace; for that dry, hard, green fig has hit you in the eye.”

“That,” says Wisdom, turning round on to his stomach, “is a warning that the drought is upon us—and now, God be praised, the days of the swim before breakfast may begin—the days of idleness in some shade, while the sun-baked earth cracks around us—the days of the continuous screech of the cicada; days with long hot nights spent under the olives; days of the big drought; and days, thank God, when even your pen will cease to scratch.”

Marina replies: “Your impatience is needless, for the book now ends.”

THE END

THESE ARE THE ANCESTORS AND INVADERS OF THE PEOPLE OF CANNES

B.C.—The Celto Ligurians (the Oxybians) living between the Estérel and the Var. Their capital is Egitna or Ekana.

160 B.C.—The Phoenicians.

155 B.C.—The Greeks or Phocians trading from their colony at Marseilles.

150 B.C. } The Romans. Cannes is named Castrum
50 B.C. } Marsellinum and later Castrum Romagnum.

500—The Lombards sack Castrum Marsellinum.

800—The Saracens likewise in the seventh and ninth centuries.

900—The Moors from Spain burn the entire coast, from the Rhone to Nice, in the reign of “Louis the Blind.”

1035—Kingdom of Provence embraces Cannes and the Litoral.

1100—The Counts of Provence take Cannes into their keeping after the fall of the Eastern Empire. Cannes is called Castrum Canoïs and the town of the Suquet is built.

1300—The Abbot of Les Lérins Islands builds the chateaux of St. Honorat and the Suquet

for protection against the infidels, and to reward these works Raymond Béranger, Count of Provence, exempts Cannes and the Islands from all taxes. Cannes is renamed *Castrum Francum*.

1447—Under King René de Provence Cannes becomes a Municipality and has three councils.

1519—Charles V. invades Cannes, and a French fleet under Andrea Doria attacks the invaders. The Spaniards pillage the country. Anne de Montmorency, to end war, creates a famine.

1579—Religious wars devastate the country.

1635—The Spaniards under Philip IV. attack St. Honorât and the coastal towns. They remain in Cannes and Grasse a year.

1706—The Piedmontese overrun the country.

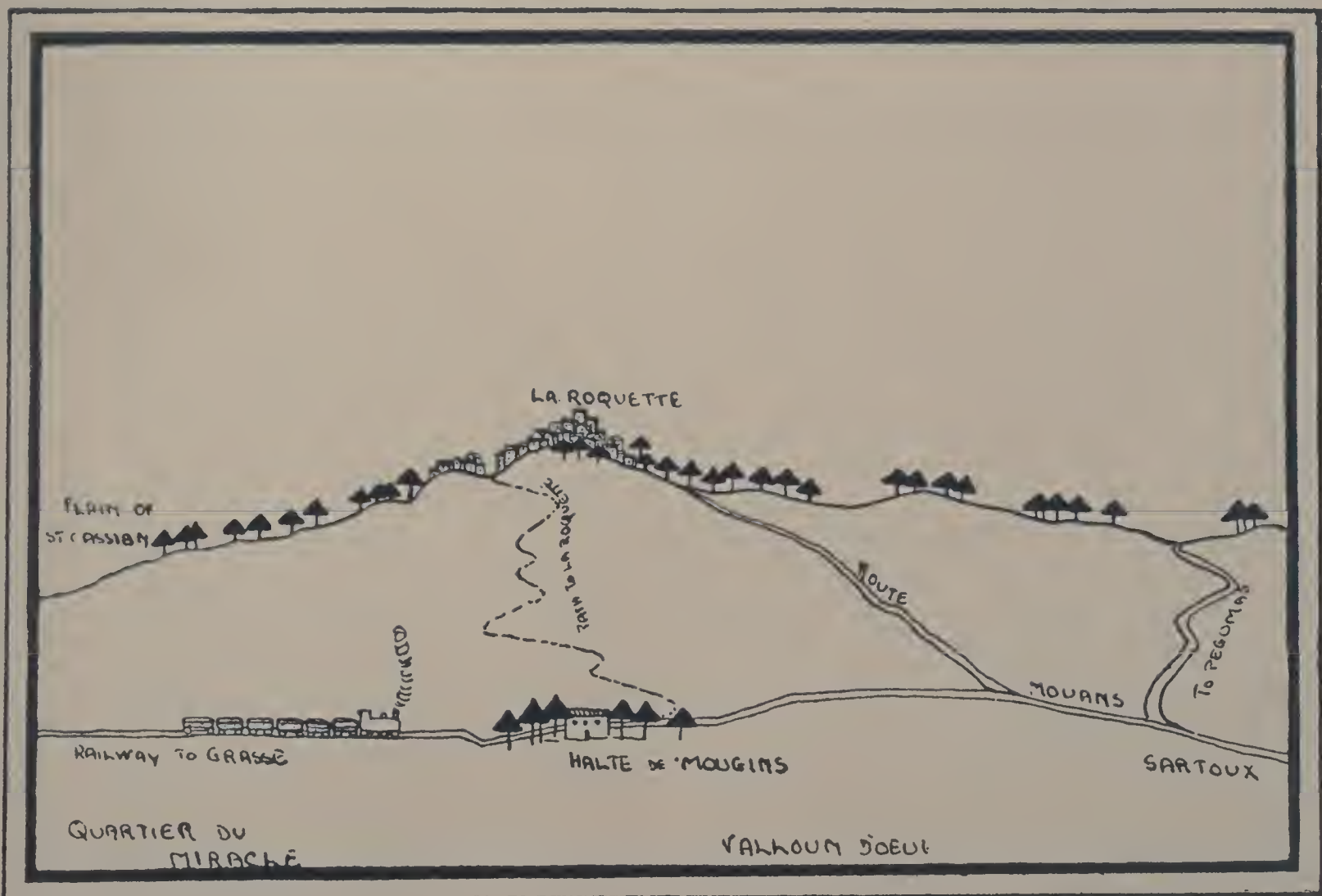
1746—The Austrians or Germans, under General Maximilian Brown, pillage the Litoral.

1779—The English bombard the coast.

1815—Napoleon lands from Elba, at Golfe Jouan, and camps in Cannes, en route for Paris.

1834—Lord Brougham visits Cannes and remains.

Note.—History, owing to lack of space, must perforce stop at this arrival, and the author presents her apologies to all the illustrious personages who followed, beginning with King Edward VII., and ending with Monsieur Cornuché, to say nothing of the innumerable dethroned monarchs who came between.



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